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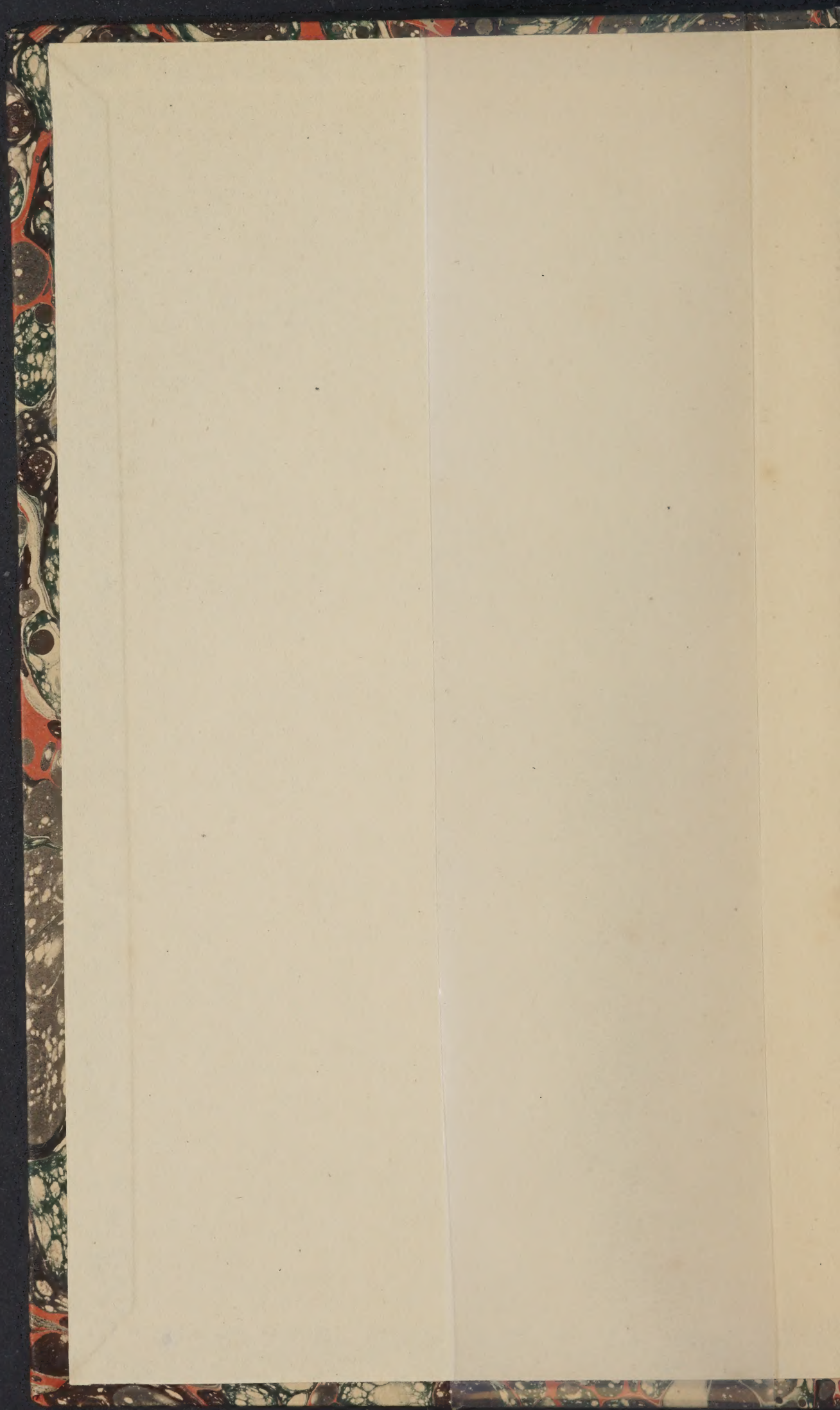
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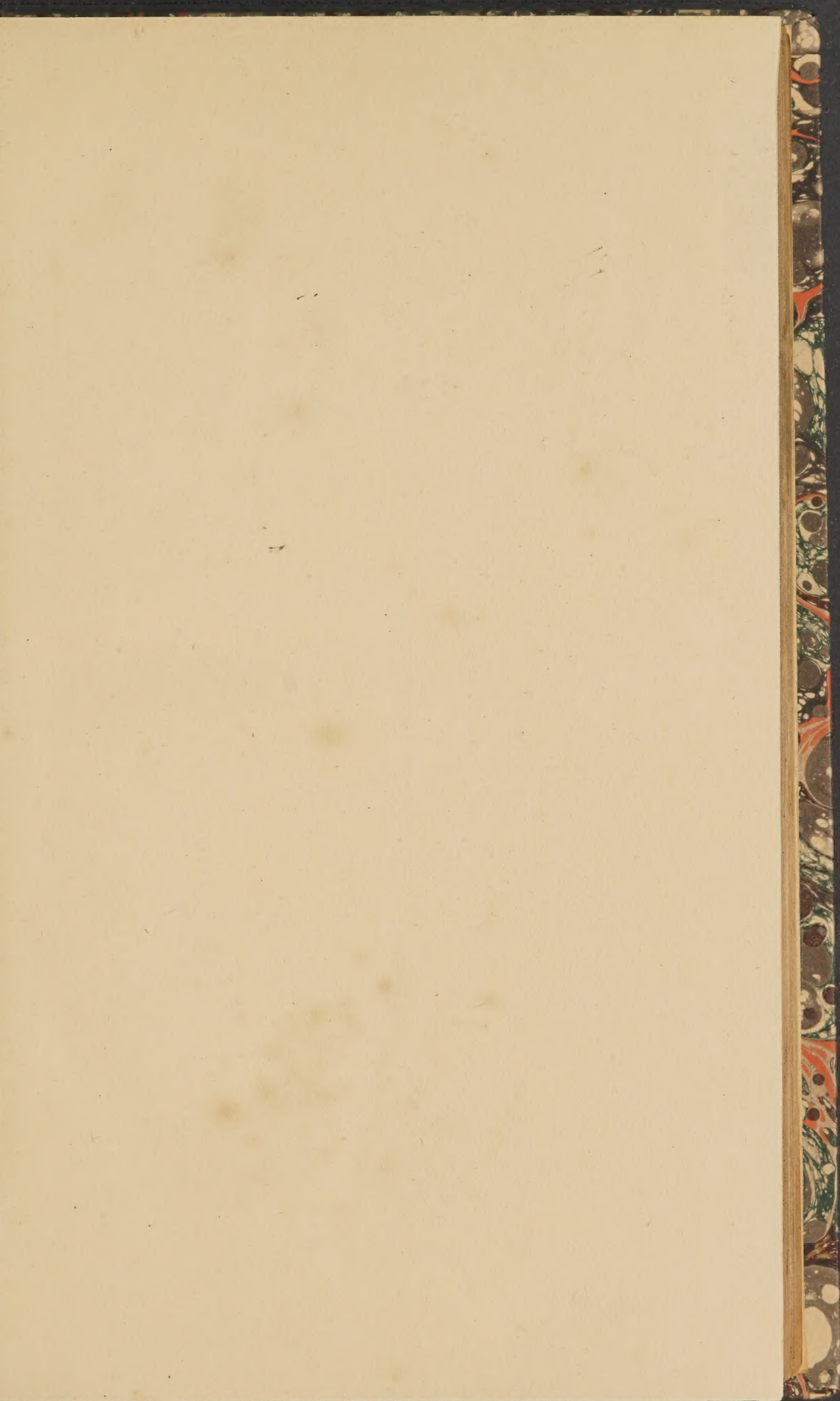
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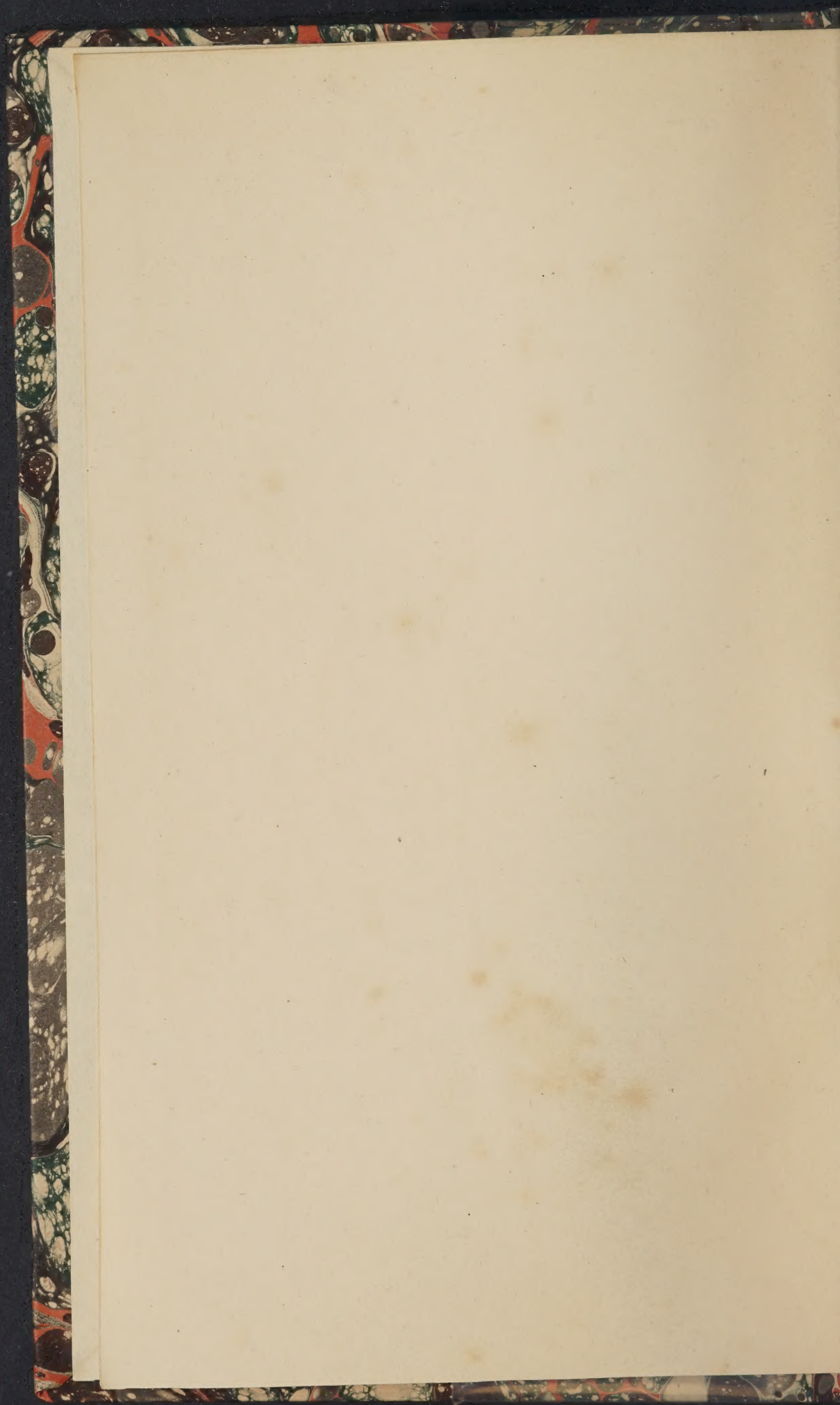












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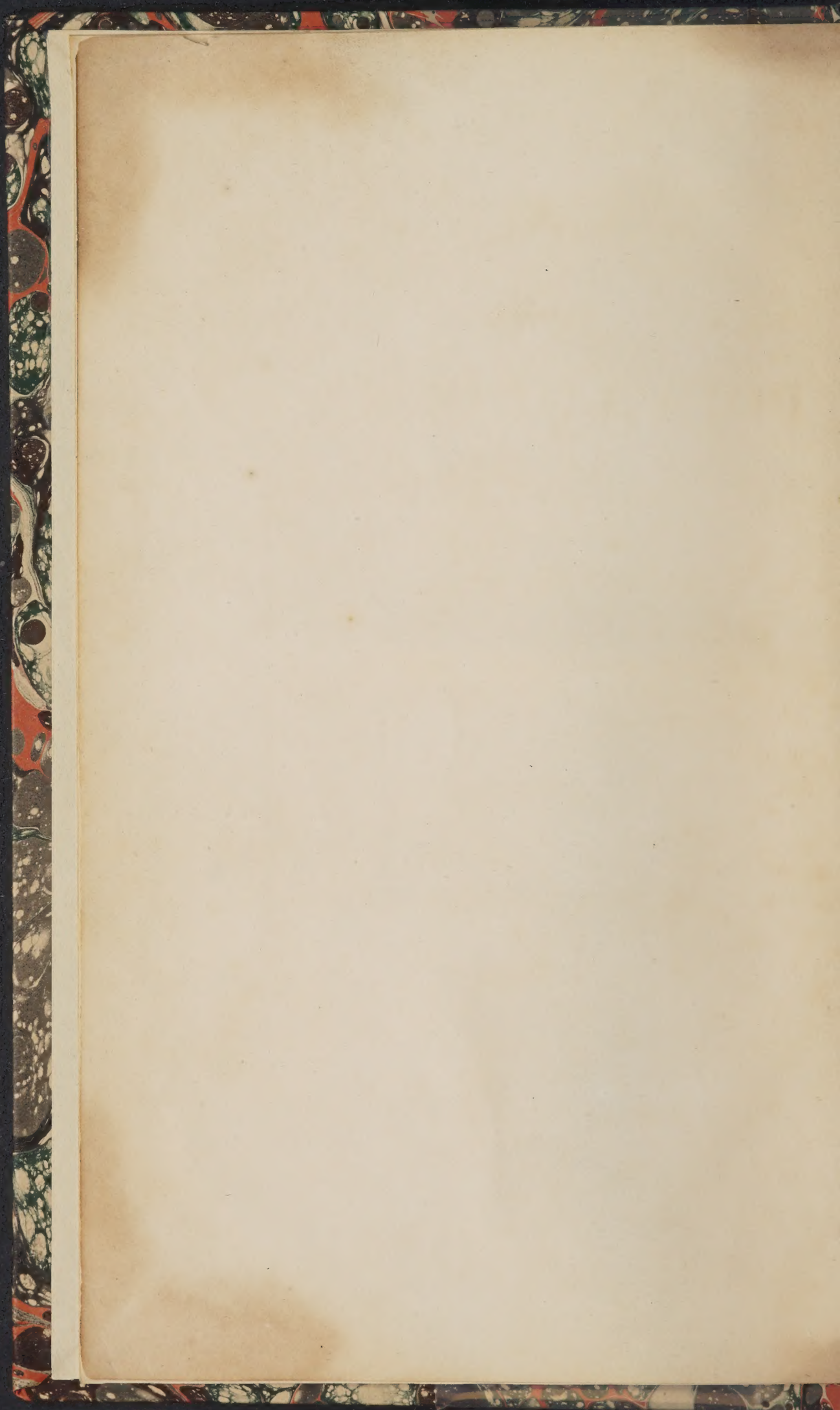
POEMS OF OSSIAN,

ORRANN, ISLAND.

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY HUGH AND JOHN MACLEOD.

PRINTED BY
JAMES WILSON, Glasgow,
1810.



W. H. Jackson

1937.

AN

ORIGINAL COLLECTION

OF THE

POEMS OF OSSIAN,

ORRANN, ULIN,

And other Bards,

WHO FLOURISHED IN THE SAME AGE.

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

HUGH AND JOHN M'CALLUM.

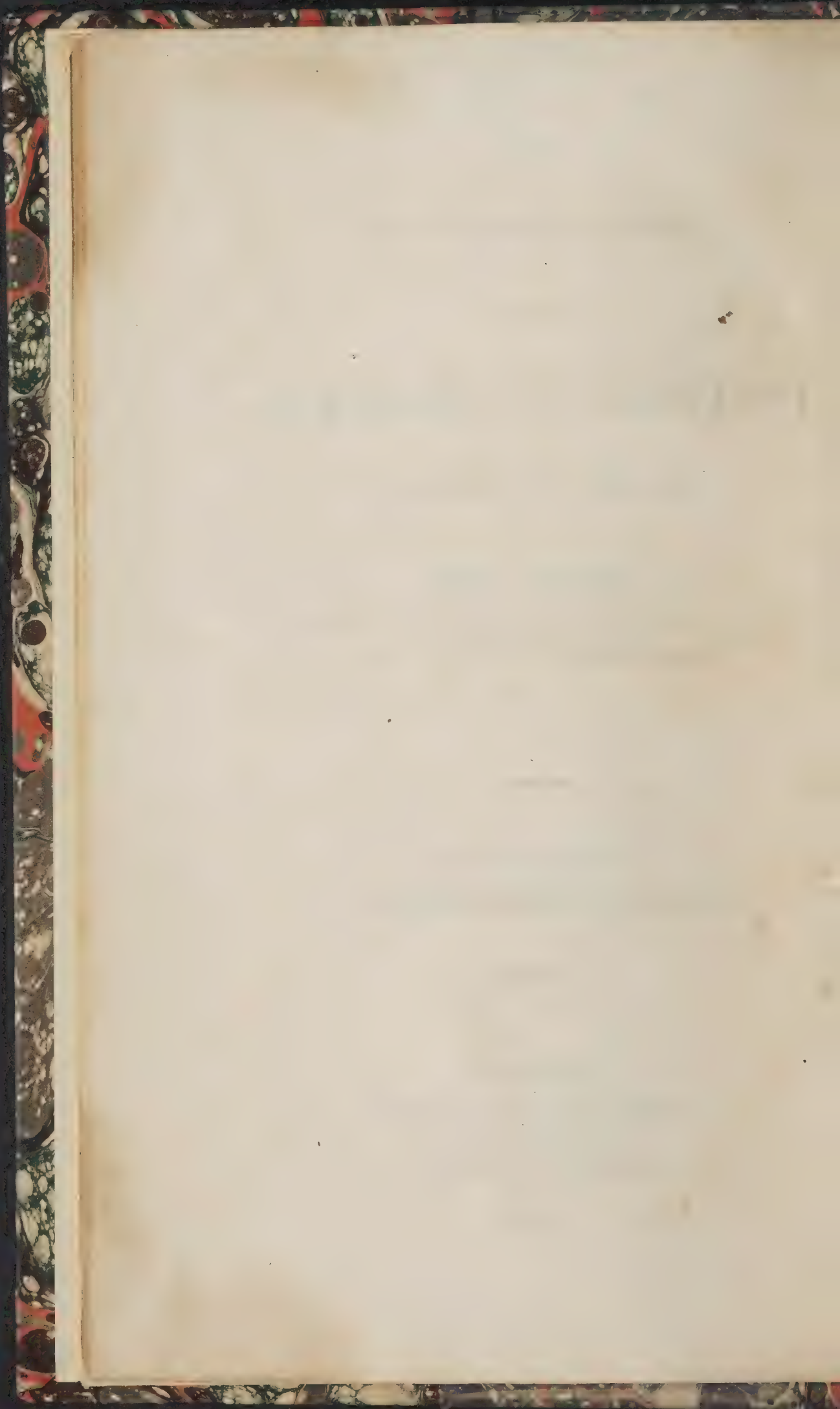
MONTROSE:

Printed at the Review Newspaper Office,

FOR THE EDITORS,

By James Watt, Bookseller.

1816.



DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION),

TO

His Royal Highness

THE DUKE OF YORK,

PRESIDENT,

AND

THE OTHER NOBLE AND ILLUSTRIOUS MEMBERS

OF

THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY

OF

London.



PREFACE.

AFTER the Editors devoted much of their time in compiling materials for an additional collection of Ossian's poems, and in comparing different editions collected from oral recitation; having also perused the controversy, written by men of highly respectable abilities, establishing the authenticity of the poems of Ossian; also, upon the other hand, considered what has been stated against the authenticity of these poems, by a few whose abilities are well known in other matters, though they have failed in this vain and frivolous attempt. Having contemplated both sides of the question, and weighed the balance with reason and justice; the Editors consulted with some of the first characters in the nation about the matter, who, after serious consideration, have granted their approbation for publishing the following sheets, and favoured the Editors, not only with

their wise and friendly instructions, but also with their liberal subscriptions and support to defray the expence of printing.

This work is much indebted to the royal family, nobility, ladies, and gentry of Britain at large, particularly to the right reverend bishops and clergy of every denomination, and to the respectable subscribers of every rank; the work is under double obligation to the benevolence of the people of England and lowlands of Scotland, although unacquainted with the original of these poems, who did not hesitate to give their generous assistance to prevent so ancient a monument of genius from being lost; and the Editors most respectfully and unfeignedly thank the public, for the more than ordinary encouragement given them for executing this work; the number of the subscribers does them honour: they can present to the public a considerable number of the first names in the nation; as more have come to their hands than have appeared before the works of authors of established reputation, which the list of subscribers annexed to the work will testify.

The novelty of cadence, in what is called prose version, though not destitute of harmony, will not to common readers supply the absence of the frequent returns of rhyme. It is, however, doubtful whether the harmony which poems might derive from rhyme, even in much better hands than that of the Editors, would atone for the simplicity and

energy which they would lose. The determination of this point shall be left to our readers.

The language and the structure of these poems, like every other thing about them, bear the most striking characters of antiquity. The language is bold, animated, and metaphorical; such as it is found to be in all infant states, where the words, as well as the ideas and objects, must be few; and where the language, like the imagination, is strong and undisciplined. No abstract, and few general, terms occur in the poems of Ossian: of course the conversation is figurative and poetical; adorned with such tropes of rhetoric as a modern would scarce venture to use in the boldest flights of language. This character, therefore, so conspicuous in the poems of Ossian, could be impressed so deeply on them only by one who saw, and felt, and bore a part in the scenes he is describing. A poet, in his closet, could no more compose like Ossian, than he could act like him in the field or in the mountain.

The composition also, though it is, like the language, bold, nervous, and concise, is yet plain and artless; without any thing of that modern refinement, or elaborate decoration, which waits on the advancement of literature. No foreign ornament is hunted after. The poet is always content with those which his subject naturally suggests, or which lie within his view; farther than that tract of heavens, earth, air, and sea,

which lay; we may say, within his study, he rarely makes any excursion. The wild and grand nature with which he was familiar, and his own vast genius, were the only resources to which he cared to be indebted for his ornaments.

The love of novelty, which, in some degree, is common to all mankind, is more particularly the characteristic of that mediocrity of parts, which distinguishes more than the one half of the human species. This inconstant disposition is never more conspicuous, than in what regards the article of amusement. We change our sentiments concerning it every moment, and the distance between our admiration and extreme contempt, is so very small, that the one is almost a sure presage of the other. The poets, whose business it is to please, must very often forfeit their own judgment to this variable temper of the bulk of their readers, and accommodate their writings to this unsettled taste. A fame so fluctuating deserves not to be much valued.

Ossian is perhaps the only poet who never relaxes, or lets himself down into the light and amusing strain; which I readily admit to be no small disadvantage to him with the bulk of readers. He moves perpetually in the region of the grand and the pathetic. Assuming it then, as we well may, that the poems now under consideration are genuine, venerable monuments of very remote antiquity, we proceed to make some re-

marks upon their general spirit and strain. The two great characteristics of Ossian's poetry, are tenderness and sublimity: it breathes nothing of the gay and cheerful kind; an air of solemnity and seriousness is diffused over the whole. One key-note is struck at the beginning, and supported to the end: nor is any ornament introduced, but what is generally concordant with the usual tone of melody. The events recorded are all serious and grave; the scenery throughout wild and romantic. The extended heath by the sea-shore; the mountain shaded with mist; the torrent rushing through a solitary valley; the scattered oaks; and the tombs of warriors overgrown with moss—all produce a solemn attention in the mind, and prepare it for great and extraordinary events. We find not in Ossian an imagination that sports and dresses its gay trifles to please the fancy; his poetry, more perhaps than that of any other writer, deserves to be styled the poetry of the heart. It is a heart penetrated with noble sentiments, and with sublime and tender passions; a heart that glows and kindles the fancy; a heart that is full, and pours itself forth. Ossian did not write like modern poets—to please readers and critics. He sung from the love of poetry and song; his delight was to think of the heroes amongst whom he had flourished; to recall the affecting incidents of his life; to dwell upon his past wars, and love, and friendship, till, as he ex-

presses it himself, "there comes a voice to Ossian, and awakes his soul. It is the voice of years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds:" and under this true poetic inspiration, giving vent to his genius, no wonder we should so often hear and acknowledge, in his strains, the powerful and ever pleasing voice of nature.

It is necessary here to observe, that the beauties of Ossian's writings cannot be felt by those who have given them only a single or a hasty perusal. His manner is so different from that of the poets to whom we are accustomed; his style is so concise and so much crowded with imagery; the mind is kept at such a stretch in accompanying the author, that an ordinary reader is at first apt to be dazzled and fatigued rather than pleased. His poems require to be taken up at intervals, and to be frequently reviewed, and then it is impossible but his beauties must open to every reader who is capable of sensibility. Those who have the highest degree of it, will relish them the most.

In every age, there has been a neglect of living authors: it often happens, that the man who writes, differs greatly from the same man in common life; his foibles, however, are obliterated by death, and his better parts, his writings, remain; his character is formed from them, and he, that was no extraordinary man in his own time, becomes the wonder of succeeding ages. From this

source, proceeds our veneration for the dead. Their virtues remain, but the vices, which were once blended with their virtues, have died with themselves.

Sublimity, as belonging to sentiment, coincides, in a great measure, with magnanimity, heroism, and generosity of sentiment. Whatever discovers human nature in its greatest elevation; whatever bespeaks a high effort of soul, or shows a mind superior to pleasures, to dangers, and to death, forms what may be called the moral or sentimental sublime, for which Ossian is eminently distinguished. Wherever he appears, we behold the hero.

The objects which he pursues are truly great: to bend the proud, to protect the injured, to defend his friends, to overcome his enemies by generosity more than by force. A portion of the same spirit actuates all the other heroes; valour reigns, but it is a generous valour, void of cruelty, animated by honour, not by hatred. We behold no debasing passion among Fingal's heroes, no spirit of avarice or insult, but a contention for fame; a desire of being distinguished and remembered for gallant actions; a love of justice, and a zealous attachment to their friends and country. Such is the strain of sentiment in the whole of Ossian's works.

Among the causes which make our ancient poems vanish so rapidly, poverty, and the iron

rod, in most places, have a large share; from the baneful shade of these destroyers of the muses, the light of the song must fast retire. It is with exceeding joy that the increase of more useful knowledge can be mentioned as another reason for the neglect of ancient tradition, owing much to the benevolent and Christian scheme of the honourable society of London and Edinburgh, who have this for their object. Once the humble, but happy vassal, sat at his ease at the foot of his grey rock, or green tree, contemplating on the works of nature, adorned with all her beauty and charms; few were his wants, and fewer still his cares; he beheld his beloved spouse, and affectionate children, diverting themselves about his happy cottage. His herds frisked around him on his then unmeasured mountain. He hummed the song, and tuned his harp with joy, while his soul, in silence, blessed his chieftain.

“ Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast;
To soften rocks, and bend the knotted oak.”

If we err in praising too much the time of our forefathers, it were also repugnant to good sense, to be altogether blind to the imperfections of our own. If our forefathers had not so much wealth, they had certainly fewer vices than the present age. Their tables, it is true, were not so well provided with superfluity and delicious varieties, neither were their beds so soft as those of modern times. And this, in the eyes of men who place

their ultimate happiness in those conveniences of life, gives us a great advantage over them.

Notwithstanding the poetical advantages which are ascribed to Ossian's machinery, it must be acknowledged it would have been much more beautiful and perfect, had the author discovered some knowledge of a Supreme Being. But those who write in the Gaelic language seldom mention religion in their profane poetry; and when they professedly write of religion, they never mix with their compositions the actions of their heroes. To allege that a nation is void of all religion, would betray ignorance of the history of mankind. The tradition of their fathers, and their own observations on the works of nature, together with that superstition which is inherent in the human frame, have in all ages raised in the minds of men some ideas of a superior being. Hence it is, that in darkest times, and among most barbarous nations, the very populace themselves had some faint idea at least of a divinity. The Indians, who worship no God, believe that he exists. It would be doing injustice to the author of these poems, to think that he had not opened his conceptions to that primitive and greatest of all truths. But, let his religion be what it will, it is certain, that he has not alluded to christianity, or any of its rites, in his poems; which ought to fix his opinions, at least, to an era prior to that religion.

Among the nations of the east, poetry had the

same attention paid to it. The book of Job is truly poetical. In the western parts, the remains of Runic and Celtic poetry, show how early and how carefully this art was cultivated, insomuch that some nations could never be reconciled, even to the Scriptures, till they had got them in the form of poems. In consequence of this influence of poetry over the passions, we find, that in the early stages of all states, of which we have an account, it has been encouraged and honoured, the persons of its professors held sacred, and their character respected. The holiest men, as Moses, David, and Solomon, were eminent for their skill in it. The greatest lawgivers, as Lycurgus, Solon, and Alfred—the greatest warriors, Alexander, Cæsar, and Augustus, practised or patronized the art. To polished nations, poetry affords pleasure; but to infant states, it affords not only pleasure, but advantage: and for the one reason or the other, both have never failed to recommend it, by making it an ingredient in their future felicity; all ages, nations, and religions, agreeing in giving music and poetry a place in their paradise, however much they differ in their other notions of it. If this poetry has been cultivated in other nations, and allowed to have such influence upon their morals, it might be expected to flourish more here under its peculiar advantages, so as to produce all the effects ascribed to it upon the Caledonian heroes.

The rest of this preface is intended to answer Doctor Samuel Johnson, and Mr. Malcolm Laing, the Doctor's disciple, and one of the greatest champions that ever started against the authenticity of Ossian's poems. We must beg the indulgence of our readers, while we follow them both through the mazes which they tread. To ascertain such an important point in the history of literature, must be an object highly interesting to every reader.

If the dispute betwixt James M'Pherson, Esq. and Dr. Samuel Johnson, had been concerning manuscripts brought from a distant or unknown region, with which we had no intercourse; or concerning a translation from the Asiatic or American language, which scarce any body understood, suspicions might naturally have arisen, and an author's assertion been anxiously and scrupulously weighed. But in the case of a literal translation, professed to be given of old traditional poems of our own country; of poems asserted to be known in the original to many thousand inhabitants of Great Britain, and illustrated too by many of their tales and current stories concerning them, such extreme scepticism is altogether out of place. For who would have been either so hardy, or so stupid, as to attempt a fraud which could not have failed of being immediately detected? Either the author must have had the influence to engage, as confederates in the fraud, all the natives

of the Highlands and Islands, dispersed as they are, throughout every corner of the British dominions, or we should, before this time, have heard their voice exclaiming—"These are not our poems, nor what we were accustomed to hear from our bards, or from our fathers." Such remonstrances would, at least, have reached those who dwell in a part of the country, which is adjacent to the Highlands; and must have come loud to the ears of such, especially, as were known to be promoters of Mr. M'Pherson's undertaking. The silence of a whole country, in this case, and of a country, whose inhabitants are well known to be attached, in a remarkable degree, to all their own antiquities, is of as much weight as a thousand positive testimonies. The Scots, in place of supporting so ridiculous a claim, must have utterly rejected it.

But as reasoning alone is not apt to make much impression, where suspicions have been entertained concerning a matter of fact, it was thought proper to have recourse to express testimonies. The honourable Highland Society of Scotland applied to several persons of credit and honour, both gentlemen of fortune and clergymen, who are natives of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and well acquainted with the language of the country: some of these have had it in their power to be more particular and explicit in their testimonies than others. There is not, however,

one person who insinuates the most remote suspicion that Mr. Macpherson has either forged or adulterated any one of the poems he has published; but we beg to refer the reader to the report of the committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, where a copy of the above gentlemen's letters are inserted, with the affidavits of others, for the perusal of the public.

With regard to the manner in which the originals of these poems have been preserved and transmitted, which has been represented as mysterious and inexplicable, we have the following plain but satisfactory account: That until the present century, almost every great family in the Highlands had its bard, to whose office it belonged to be master of all the poems of reputation in the country; that among these poems, the works of Ossian are easily distinguished from those of later bards, by several peculiarities in the style and manner; that Ossian has always been reputed the Homer of the Highlands, and all his compositions held in singular esteem and veneration; that it was wont to be the great entertainment of the Highlanders, to pass the winter evenings in discoursing of the times of Fingal, and rehearsing these old poems, of which they have been all along enthusiastically fond; that when assembled at their festivals, or any public occasions, wagers were often laid who could repeat most of them; and to have store of them in their memories, was both

an honourable and a profitable acquisition, as it procured them access to the families of great men: that with regard to their antiquity, they are beyond all memory or tradition, in so much that there is a phrase commonly used in the Highlands to this day, when they would express any thing which is of the most remote or unknown antiquity, importing that it belongs to the age of Fingal.

Before mankind became acquainted with the art of writing, all the transactions, worthy of being preserved, were couched in verse, which bards repeated on solemn occasions, and sent from one generation to another by oral tradition. We have Cicero's authority (*Tusculan Questions*, L. IV. No. 3 and 4), that at Roman festivities, anciently, the virtues and exploits of their great men were sung. And *Ammianus Marcellinus* (L. XV. c. 9) informs us, that they sung, in heroic verse, the gallant actions of illustrious men.

When the use of letters became known, these songs were undoubtedly the first compositions upon which that valuable invention was employed; for as they were the only repositories of the laws, religious ceremonies, and memorable actions of their fore-fathers, mankind would be naturally solicitous to have them carefully collected and preserved in writing. The same custom prevailed in Peru and Mexico, as we learn from Garcilasso, and other authors. We are also told by Father Gobien, that even the illiterate inhabitants

of the Marian Islands have bards, who are greatly admired, because in their songs are celebrated the feats of their ancestors. There are traces of the same among the Apalachites in North America. The first seal that a young Greenlander catches is made a feast for the family and neighbours. The young champion, during the repast, descants upon his address in catching the animal; the guests admire his dexterity, and extol the flavour of the treat. Their only music, which is a sort of drum, accompanies a song in praise of seal-catching; in praise of their ancestors; or in welcoming the sun's return to them. Take the following example:

"The welcome sun returns again,
Amna-ajah, ajah, ah-hu!
And brings us weather fine and fair,
Amna-ajah, ajah, ah-hu!"

The names of so many credible witnesses, silenced, for a time, the enemies of Ossian; till Dr. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* renewed the dispute, and set again all the scribblers in an uproar. This learned sage aspersed, not only the translator, but likewise his countrymen, with every illiberal taunt that envy and malice could invent. We shall leave to the memory of the Dr. the satisfaction arising from the applause of his admirers, and proceed to examine his arguments. The hostile spirit with which he set forward in his inquiries is well known; he

knew nothing of the language or the people; his researches were confined to the inns where he put up, or to the families where he visited, most of whom were habituated to English manners and customs. Were any foreigner, distrustful of the works of our great bards being genuine, to proceed along the great roads of England, and endeavour to procure attestations to the authenticity of *Paradise Lost*, or Shakespeare's plays, at every inn where he alighted, we are afraid he, as well as Dr. Johnson, would retain his doubts at the end of his journey.

Our adversary introduces the debate with acquainting us that he made particular inquiry in the islands, "and was informed by a gentleman, who is generally acknowledged the greatest master of Hebridian antiquities, that there have indeed once been *Bards* and *Seanachies*; and that *Seanachie* signified the man of talk, or of conversation; but that neither *Bard* nor *Seanachie* had existed for some centuries." On this information, and the notion that the Gaelic language was an unwritten language, Dr. Johnson chiefly grounds his disbelief of the works of Ossian: but we do not despair of producing reasons that will convince the reader of the falsity of both.

As Dr. Johnson conceals the name of this boasted antiquarian, the whole weight of the assertion rests upon his word. Now, what degree of credit is due to that, will be seen hereafter;

but we can prove that bards, of distinguished abilities were, and are, still in existence in the Highlands; for the satisfaction of our readers, we shall insert a few of their names. Duncan M'Intyre, of Glenorchy, Argyleshire, author of that immortal poem, entitled *Bein-Dourain*, with many other songs of extraordinary merit, which are a great acquisition to the Celtic language, died only within these six years. Mr. William Ross, of Ross-shire, died only a few years ago, in the prime of life; some of his productions are still extant, as a memorial of his ingenuity and taste, highly deserving to be enrolled in the annals of history, as an ornament to succeeding ages. Robert M'Kay, commonly called *Rob Donn*, of Lord Reay's country, died about thirty years ago, whose works are an honour to the republic of letters. Kenneth M'Kenzie, of Inverness-shire, nothing inferior to those named above, is still alive. John Murray, Esq. writer, late of London, now residing at Ardfreck, Isle of Skye, if suitable encouragement was afforded him, is capable of composing poetry in Gaelic, Latin, and English, that would not disgrace the genius of a Milton or a Shakespeare. Several more might be adduced in the Highlands and Isles, who, if they met with encouragement, would not be inferior to any foreign poets.

Having, by way of preamble, observed this much with regard to the bards and compositions

of the Highlanders, we shall proceed to the rest of Dr. Johnson's arguments, and taking paragraph by paragraph, answer the most important of them with as much precision as the crowded and confused manner in which he has arranged them will admit.

"Of the Gaelic language," says he, "as I understood nothing, I cannot say more than I have been told; it is the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood."

Though the Dr. at the first setting out, confesses his ignorance of the Gaelic; yet this daring self-sufficient man, in the same breath, pronounces it the rude speech of a barbarous people*; but as he brings no authority to support him, let us adhere to the accounts of persons that are better versed in the language, and who assure us that the numerous flections of consonants, and variation in declension, make it very copious†.

* Notwithstanding the Greeks, and after them the Romans, had the vanity to call all other nations barbarians, it must appear very ridiculous, in a man of Dr. Johnson's knowledge, to stigmatize, with that appellation, the undoubted remains of the Celtæ, a celebrated people, who once possessed all the kingdoms, from the pillars of Hercules, to the banks of the Vistula, and from the Hellespont, to the shores of the Baltic. With respect to the Highlanders, we boldly assert the imputation to be injurious and false: the short account given of their manners, from *Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs*, at the end of the third book, shows them to be as much civilized as any of their neighbours.

† See the *Dissertation concerning the Era of Ossian*.

Martin, who was a native of Skye, and wrote in the last century, mentions several ancient manuscripts in the characters of the country, which he himself met with: *Avicenna*, *Averroes*, *Joannes-de-vigo*, *Bernardus Gordonus*, and several volumes of *Hippocrates*, in the possession of Fergus Beaton, in the island of South-Uist; he takes notice of having seen the *Life of Saint Columba*, at Mr. John M'Neils, in the isle of Barra, and another copy of the same at Mr. M'Donald's of Benbecula.

For a proof of what he relates, concerning the quarrel, or battle at sea, between John, earl of Ross, and Eneas, his son, he cites the manuscript of Macvurich, and Hugh M'Donald, two ancient genealogists. Gilbert Murray, who lived in the twelfth century, is said to have translated the *Psalms* and *Gospel* into the Irish language, or Scots Gaelic.—See the *Description of Caithness*, by the Reverend Alexander Pope, minister of Reay, in Mr. Pennant's tour in Scotland, in 1769*.

* Besides the above authorities, we see others in the attestations, particularly that of Lachlan M'Pherson, Esq. of Strathmashie, who accompanied Mr. M'Pherson, in 1760, through a part of the Highlands, when in search of the poems of Ossian, positively declares, that among the manuscripts he saw at that time, in his possession, there was one of as old a date as the year 1410. This, alone, is sufficient to confute the Dr. whose argument is grounded on hearsay, which without any evidence, in matters of fact, avails little, especially when an eye-witness publicly sets his name to what he avers.

But had we no authorities to allege on this occasion, reason alone would furnish arguments sufficient to prove that the Gaelic has been a written language for ages. The use of letters, wherever it was not known before, always accompanied the introduction of the Christian religion: now we are certain that the Highlanders, and inhabitants of the western isles of Scotland, were converted to the faith in the sixth century, since which time they must have been acquainted with the art of writing; that they should not, we must suppose their pastors, and the several communities of religious people, who, for a thousand years, subsisted among them, were either ignorant of, or never endeavoured to adapt to letters, their native language. This hypothesis outrages probability, and has not a parallel in the annals of mankind. Besides, as the Dr. himself allows the Irish to be a cultivated tongue, we cannot conceive how he can refuse some degree of improvement to the Gaelic, since it is a dialect of the same language, and there has been always an intimate and constant intercourse between the nations.

No person can imagine that the Hebrew teemed with books when Moses wrote, and yet the two songs that go in that lawgiver's name, are in the highest strain of poetry. The same may be said of Homer; though the Greek, in his time, was in its infancy, his productions have never yet been equalled by the greatest geniuses of the most re-

finest and polished ages. Ossian, like Homer, lived in an early period. As music and songs of bards, were the favourite amusement of his countrymen, as well as of all the Celtic nations, the language has been sufficiently polished for poetical compositions; yet not so much so, as to render it quite effeminate, like most of our modern tongues, which are so full of abstract terms, that no poet of our days rises to that unaffected strength of expression, so remarkable in the compositions of primitive times. Of these, the old scriptures, Homer, and Ossian, will remain the patterns of style and sublimity to every succeeding generation.

“ In an unwritten speech, nothing that is not very short, is transmitted from one generation to another. Few have opportunities of hearing a long composition often enough to learn it, or have inclination to repeat it so often as is necessary to retain it, and what is once forgotten is lost for ever. I believe there cannot be recovered, in the whole Erse language, five hundred lines of which there is an evidence to prove them an hundred years old. Yet I hear the father of Ossian boasts of two chests of ancient poetry, which he suppressed, because they are too good for the English. He that goes into the Highlands, with a mind naturally acquiescent, and a credulity eager for wonders, may come back with an opinion very different from me; for the inhabitants, knowing the igno-

rance of all strangers in their language and antiquities, perhaps are not scrupulous adherents to truth; yet I do not say they deliberately speak studied falsehood, or have a settled purpose to deceive. They have enquired and considered little, and do not always feel their ignorance. They are not much accustomed to be interrogated by others, and seem never to have thought upon interrogating themselves; so that if they do not know what they tell to be true, they likely do not perceive it to be false."

We have already shown that the transactions of all nations, before the introduction of letters, were couched in verse, and handed down to posterity by persons who made it their sole study to learn these compositions themselves, and teach them to others. This was the first origin of poetry: hence the Greeks or Rhapsodists, of whom Homer was one; hence the Scalds or Scalders of Scandinavia; hence the Eubages or Bardi of Gaul; hence the Seanachies or Ferdan of the Irish and Scotch. The great number that lived by this profession, whose sole time was then taken up in repeating them in public and teaching them to others, made them not only masters of the longest compositions, but rendered it impossible that any worth preserving should be lost.

That some of these songs were of considerable length, we may judge by what Tacitus relates of the Germans, whose whole history, he says, was

recorded in ancient poems delivered down by oral tradition. We are assured that Garcilasso composed the *History of Peru* from the songs which his mother, a princess descended from the Incas, had taught him in his youth. Now, poems could not be very short that contained all the actions of a warlike people, or from which the materials of a history could be collected.

As to the orthography of the Gaelic, the bigotted sage knew nothing about it; but allowing it even to be in the unsettled state that he represents, we see no advantageous consequence he can draw from thence, since a language may arrive at no small degree of perfection, and be unsettled in its orthography. Witness the English, which, notwithstanding the number of dictionaries that have been compiled to fix its orthography, has still many words that are spelled according to the caprice and whim of writers. What the Dr. advances, that there is not, in the Gaelic language, five hundred lines in which there is an evidence to prove them a hundred years old, is equally erroneous and absurd—as false as malicious: besides the works of Ossian, whose authenticity is attested by so many credible witnesses, and antiquity undeniable, there are many compositions in the Gaelic language, which might be proved much older than the term he speaks of. Had Dr. Johnson any candour, he would have preferred these reasons to uncertain hearsay.

By what the Dr. states, it evidently appears that many gave him very different accounts from those he has delivered to the public. But the Dr. hated the Scotch; accordingly, his journey among them was not to give a fair and impartial account of the people and their manners, but only to vilify the nation in general; to contradict, in particular, all that had been advanced with regard to the poems published by Mr. M'Pherson. But though, in a strain of insolent pedantry, he upbraids them with ignorance, yet he is not quite so abandoned as to charge them with any open breach of sincerity: therefore, truth sometimes broke from him by surprise.

“I suppose my opinion of the poems of Ossian is already discovered; I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could show the original, nor can it be shown by any other; to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence with which the world is not yet acquainted; and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt. It would be easy to show it if he had it; but where could it be had; it is too long to be remembered, and the language formerly had nothing written. He has doubtless inserted names that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some wandering ballads, if any can be found; and the names, and some of the images, being recollected, make an

inaccurate auditor imagine, by the help of Caledonian bigotry, that he has formerly heard the whole."

That the editor could never show the original, is asserted directly in the face of facts. Mr. M'Pherson, even before the translation made its appearance, published proposals for printing, by subscription, the originals; but finding no encouragement, he contented himself with leaving a copy of the archetype some months in the bookseller's shop, for the inspection of the public; and when *Temora* came out, the original of the seventh book was given as a specimen of the Gaelic language. We cannot devise what other methods, than these mentioned, the editor could have possibly taken, to convince the public, in general, of the authenticity of the poems.

As for the editor passing his own compositions for ancient poems, by inserting names that circulate in ancient stories and wandering ballads; the impossibility of such a fraud appears, by the pains taken to compare Mr. M'Pherson's version with the original songs still remembered by many of the natives, as well as with written copies to be found in the hands of some gentlemen of taste and learning. Upon the nearest examinations, the translations were allowed to be amazingly literal, even so much so, as often to preserve the cadence of the Gaelic versification*.

* This, Mr. Becket has solemnly avowed in the public papers.

“It is said, that some men of integrity profess to have heard parts of it; but they heard them when they were boys, and it was never said that any of them could recite six lines. They remember names, and perhaps some proverbial sentiments, and having no distinct ideas, coin a resemblance without an original. The persuasion of the Scots, however, is far from being universal; and in a question so capable of proof, why should doubt be suffered to continue. The editor has been heard to say, that part of the poem has been received by him in the Saxon character: he has then found, by some peculiar fortune, an unwritten language, written in a character which the natives probably never beheld.”

The first part of this argument has been already proved false, by many credible witnesses of the first respectability: as for Mr. M'Pherson to hold forth, that part of the poem has been received by him in the Saxon character, it was no “peculiar fortune;” there are a considerable number of Gaelic Bibles, at this day, printed in the Saxon character, throughout the Highlands. The Editors of these sheets have one of them; these characters are still extant in writing, much more so at the period that Mr. M'Pherson compiled his edition of the poems of Ossian.

Sir James Ware (in the *Antiquities of Ireland*, c. iii.) informs us, that the Saxons, having no alphabet of their own, borrowed the old British

letters from the Irish, when, after their conversion, they flocked to that kingdom for education. Camden, p. 1318, inclines to the same opinion. What seems to put it beyond a doubt is, that the Saxon character is *similar* in Scotland at this day. The Dr. therefore, discovers his ignorance in upbraiding Mr. M'Pherson with finding an unwritten language, which the natives never beheld, since it was the common one they were acquainted with.

“I have yet supposed no imposture but in the publisher, yet am far from certainty, that some translations have not been lately made that may now be obtruded as parts of the original work. Credulity on one part is a strong temptation to deceit on the other, especially to deceit of which no personal injury is the consequence, and which flatters the author with his own ingenuity. The Scots have something to plead for their easy reception of an improbable fiction; they are seduced by their fondness for their supposed ancestors. A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love Scotland better than truth; he will always love it better than inquiry; and if falsehood flatters his vanity, will not be very diligent to detect it. To be ignorant is painful; but it is dangerous to quiet our uneasiness by the delusive opiate of hasty credulity.”

Dr. Johnson, after every attempt to overthrow the authenticity of Ossian, here maliciously endeavours to invalidate whatever may hereafter be

produced in his favour. But the supposition that some have been employed in making a Gaelic version, to obtrude upon the public for the original, is as groundless as it is invidious. Though Dr. Johnson is ignorant of the Gaelic language, all in the kingdom are not. W. Cambrensis, already quoted, professes to know enough to detect any forgery that might be attempted. The same gentleman declares, he had both seen and heard the poems sung, long before he saw the form in which they were given by Mr. Becket.

The acquaintance of the Irish with these poems, puts their authenticity beyond a doubt, and destroys at once the extravagant notion that the Lowlanders, as well as Highlanders, from a love to their country's supposed ancestors, have combined to palm the grossest forgeries upon the learned world. It could only be one of Dr. Johnson's disposition, who has stuck at nothing to satisfy his private antipathy, who could have had the temerity to accuse them of a thing so evidently impracticable and absurd. But, however such wanton attacks upon the character of a wise and respectable nation, may please the malignant spirit of some; yet they will never, with the better part, gain him any credit, either as a philosopher or a man.

“ But this is the age in which those who could not read have been supposed to write; in which the giants of antiquated romance have been exhibited as realities. If we know little of the

ancient Highlanders, let us not fill the vacuity with Ossian. If we have not searched the Magellanic regions, let us, however, forbear to people them with Patagons."

Dr. Samuel Johnson was the first, and will probably be the last, that travelled in search of records which he could not read, and criticised a language of which he never understood a syllable. However, we are confident that the public in general are too impartial to allow themselves to be deceived by the misrepresentations of one who was too ungenerous to judge with candour, and too ignorant to discover a fraud, if any such had been intended. The absurdity is so gross, that the public are forced, however reluctantly, to believe that these poems are not fictitious, but in reality an emblem of the customs and manners of the Caledonians at that period.

Diodorus Siculus (lib. v.) reports of the Celtic, that, though warlike, they were upright in their dealings, and far removed from deceit and duplicity. Cæsar says (*De Bello Africo*), the Gauls are of an open temper, not at all insidious; and in fight they rely on valour, not on stratagem; and though cruel to their enemies, yet Pomponius Mela (lib. iii.) observes, that they were kind and compassionate to the suppliant and unfortunate. Strabo describes the Gauls (lib. iv.) as studious of war, and of great alacrity in fighting; otherwise, an innocent people, altogether void of malignity.

He says that they had three orders of men—Bards, Priests, and Druids: that the province of the Bards was to study poetry, and to compose songs in praise of their deceased heroes; that the Priests presided over divine worship; and that the Druids, besides studying moral and natural philosophy, determined all controversies, and had some direction even in war. Cæsar, less attentive to civil matters, comprehends these three orders under the name of Druid; and observes, that the Druids teach their disciples a vast number of verses, which they must get by heart. The Celts (says Elian, *Var. Hist.*) are the most enterprising of men: they make those warriors, who die bravely in fight, the subject of songs. And Diodorus Siculus, already quoted, informs us, that the Gauls had poets termed Bards, who sung airs, accompanied with the harp, in praise of some and dispraise of others.

Of this, if reason and authentic history are to be relied on, we can entertain no doubt, but the manners of the Gallic, and British Celtic, including the Caledonians, were such as are above related; and as the manners ascribed by Ossian to his countrymen are in every particular conformable to those now mentioned, it clearly follows, that he was no inventor, but drew his pictures of manners from real life. This is proved from the same intrinsic evidence as has been urged above; and now, by authentic history so much heightened, as not to leave the least room for a doubt.

It would be an insult to the press, as well as abusing the patience of our readers, to insert here all the babbling and vain arguments that Dr. Johnson held forth to support his vulgar opinion. Having thus far answered his remarks, regarding the poems of Ossian, and the character that he imputed to the Scottish nation in general, we shall give a few hints, relating to his tour and conduct during his travels.

Dr. Johnson, who probably had never travelled farther than from Litchfield to London, would naturally be astonished at every thing he saw, and would dwell upon every common occurrence as a wonder. He was received with the most flattering marks of civility by every one, and his name had opened to him an acquaintance, which his most sanguine wishes could scarce have hoped for, but which his manners certainly would never have obtained. He was almost carried about for a show. Every one desired to have a peep at this phenomenon; and those who were so happy as to be in his company, were silent the moment he spoke, lest they should interrupt him, and lose any of the good things he was going to say. But the Dr. who never said any thing that did not convey some gross reflection upon themselves, soon made them sick of jokes at their own expence. A man of illiberal manners, and surly disposition, who all his life long had been at enmity with the Scotch, takes a

sudden resolution of travelling amongst them; not, according to his own account, "to find a people of liberal and refined education, but to see wild men and wild manners." Confined to one place, and accustomed to one train of ideas, incapable of acquiescing in all the different tempers he might meet with, and mingling with different societies, he descends from his study, where he had spent his whole life, to see the world in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. Behold this extraordinary man on his journey, in quest of barbarism! and at length sitting down, wearied, and discontented, because he has met with some degree of civility in the most desert parts; or, to speak more properly, because he has found nothing more barbarous than himself.

One cannot, therefore, be surprised at his observing, that "the windows in some of the little hovels in Scotland, do not draw up, as his own do in London, or that such a spot of ground does not produce grass, but is fertile in thistles." He found himself in a new world; his sensations were those of a child just brought forth into daylight, whose organs are confused with the numerous objects that surround him, and who discovers his surprise at every thing he sees. A petty and frivolous detail of trifling circumstances are the certain signs of ignorance and inexperience.

In regard, however, to facts, to conversation, and to affairs of literature, one might reasonably

have expected from the Dr. more candour and more veracity. But, here again we are disappointed; he has his own maxims, and he never moves from them. He has taken a resolution not to believe Fingal to be the work of Ossian, but an imposition on the public by Mr. M'Pherson; and, after various observations, almost unintelligible, from the language they are conveyed in, he is so kind as to conclude they are forgeries. Now, what degree of attention ought one to pay to a man who can misrepresent facts so grossly, and pervert them to his own purposes. "A Scotchman," Dr. Johnson says, "must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love Scotland better than truth." But what country, or what attachment, is it that makes the Dr. himself regard truth so little?

On many other subjects his observations are equally ingenious, novel, and entertaining. In spite of the many able men this country has produced, and whose works are an honour to every department of science, the Dr. finds out the Scotch are no scholars, but that they possess a middle state betwixt profound learning and profound ignorance. Thus you see how we have been hitherto imposed upon. Some people have thought that Dr. Robertson, Mr. Hume, Dr. Beattie, Dr. Blair, and Dr. Smith, were ingenious men: but quite the contrary; they are only a few degrees above profound ignorance. Suppose one should ask, at what line of this literary barometer the

Dr. places himself; whether it is at profound knowledge, at perfection itself, or whether he is contented with being only a little degree above Dr. Beattie? How much is the world obliged to Dr. Johnson for rectifying the wrong opinion entertained of the Scotch nation? They have, however, one consolation in all this dearth of learning—that they have no pedantry; that they never brandish their knowledge in your face; that they seek for no distinction in words, nor pride themselves in phrases; that they are not fond of these pompous descriptions, which “amaze the unlearned, and make the learned smile;” happy in giving no offence, but anxious to convince Dr. Johnson and his disciples of their error, and to convert them to the path of truth.

Truth will always stand on its own solid basis; and we are sensible that a candid and discerning public will not be misled by any thing which may drop from the pen of the prejudiced, however intemperate their zeal, or respectable their abilities may be. All that we solicit, in the present case, is an unbiassed attention to the plain and undorned facts which we have presumed to lay before them. Indeed, we flatter ourselves, though we have no such pretensions to literature as the Dr. that truth from us will not, on that account, meet with a less favourable reception.

The invention of letters, like most other human discoveries, was probably accidental. The Re-

verend Edward Davies, curate of Olveston, Gloucestershire, in his *Celtic Researches*, a work lately published, thinks it arose originally from symbols, and tells us, the old Welch and Irish letters are named from different trees*. Though he is of opinion the Druids were in possession of this knowledge from the remotest antiquity, he nevertheless makes it appear that they were not the original inventors, but merely religious observers of the system. It is remarkable that the names of many letters in the Hebrew, Greek, and Irish alphabets, are nearly allied. This resemblance demonstrates their descent from one original parent language; which similarity in the names, as well as in formation of letters, cannot be attributed to mere chance. Take for instance the following words:—

<i>Hebrew.</i>	<i>Greek.</i>	<i>Irish.</i>
Aleph	Alpha	Ailim
Beth	Beta	Beith
Heth	Eta	Eadha
Jod	Jota	Jodha
Nun	Nun	Nion
Resh	Ro	Ruis, &c.

Also, that the Celtic, Sanscrit, and Roman languages, bear the strongest marks of affinity, is self-evident. To give this argument its full weight, we shall here add a short synopsis of the Celtic, Sanscrit, and Roman languages.

* See his ingenious conjectures on this subject, sect. viii. page 289.

<i>Celtic.</i>	<i>Sanscrit.</i>	<i>Roman.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Dia	Deva	Deus	God
Aran	Aram	Aratum	Cultivated land
Mathair	Matara	Mater	A mother
Brathair	Bhratara	Frater	A brother
Faidh	Vaidi	Vates	A prophet
Tir	Dhara	Terrra	Land
Uim	Bhumi	Humus	Ground
Sacaird	Sacradas	Sacerdos	A priest
Dorus	Dwara	Fores	A door
Maothadh	Matta	Madidus	Wet, drunk
Maighne	Maha	Magnus	Great
Gien	Janu	Genu	The knee
Mios	Mas	Mensis	A month
Riogh	Raja	Rex	A king
Naoi	Nav	Navis	A ship
Cladh,	Cladha	Clades	A calamity
Diu	Divos	Dies	A day
Son	Swana	Sonus	Sound
Stadh	Sthan	Statio	A station
Bim	Bhim	Timor	Fear
Peann	Parna	Penna	A pen
Meadhon	Madhya	Medium	The middle
Roth	Ratha	Rota	A wheel
Fem Bhean	Vamini	Fæmina	A woman
Fear, Fir	Vir	Vir	A man
Falla	Vala	Valor	Strength
Rud	Rai	Res	A thing
Mein	Mana	Mens	The mind
Nuadh	Nava	Novus	New
Stabul	Sthir	Stabilis	Stable
Ruadh	Rudhir	Rubir	Red
Loc	Loca	Locus	A hollow
Lubhd	Lubhda	Lubido	Lust
Tu	Twau	Tu	Thou
Ceal	Cealas	Cœlum	Heaven
San-Scri- obhte	Sanskrita	Sanctum- scriptum	Holy writ

<i>Celtic.</i>	<i>Sanscrit.</i>	<i>Roman.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Aon	Ec	Unus	One
Da	Dwau	Duo	Two
Tri	Traya	Tres	Three
Ceithir	Chator	Qua	Four
Coig	Pancha	Quinque	Five
Sia	Shat	Sex	Six
Seachd	Sapta	Septem	Seven
Ocht	Ashta	Octo	Eight
Nai	Nova	Novem	Nine
Deich	Dasa	Decem	Ten *

The courteous reader will be pleased to observe, that the above Celtic words are spelled and pronounced after the Irish orthography.

The Phœnicians, if we credit fame, were the first who attempted to give stability to words, by marking them with rude characters. Pliny (lib. 5. cap. 12. also lib. 7. cap. 56.) is very full to the above purpose. It is in the next place necessary to compare these alphabets.

The Phœnician, or (which is the same thing) the Hebrew or Chaldaic letters, are, Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, He, Vau, Dsain, Cheth, Teth, Tod, Caph, Lamech, Mem, Nun, Samech, Ain, Pe, Tsade, Koph, Resh, Shin, Tau, in all twenty-two. The Greek letters introduced by Cadmus, are, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Jota, Kappa, Lambda, Mu, Nu, Omikron, Pi, Ro, Sigma, Tau, Ypsilon, in all sixteen. To these, Palamedes, about the time of the Trojan war,

* See the *Dissertation* of Mr. Huddleston, of Lunan, on the antiquity of the use of letters among the Celts, p. 384.

added, Xi, Theta, Phi, Chi; and Simonides afterwards added, Zeta, Eta, Psi, Omega. From the correspondence of the names of the Greek letters to those of the Hebrew, it is clear the former were derived from the latter. The plenitude of the Roman alphabet, as well as the name of the letters, being omitted, and the form or figure only retained, is a clear argument that it is much more modern than either of the preceding. The Irish alphabet is, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, I, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, in all seventeen. Though H has latterly crept into the language, it was originally, as among the Greeks, an aspirate, and marked by a dote above the line. It is initial in no Celtic word, and merely used as an euphonic, or in combination with some other letter, as a substitute to supply the place of some letter wanting in the Irish alphabet. The Irish alphabet contains many genuine marks of remote antiquity, which deserve minute consideration.

Its name, viz. *Beth-luis-Nion*, an Oghum; i. e. "the alphabet of Oghum." See Toland, p. 82, 83, 84, &c. This word is sometimes written Ogam and Ogma. Lucian (see Toland's quotation, p. 81 and 82) gives a very particular account of Oghum or Ogma, which he latinizes Ogmios.

This name is no idle fiction or whim of the *Bards* or *Seanachies*, as poor Pinkerton imagines. Lucian, who wrote about three centuries before St. Patrick's arrival, calls it *phone te epichorio*;

i. e. a word of the country, a Gaelic word. The antiquity of the word *Ogum*, and that it was Celtic, is thus established as early as the middle of the second century. The title of the Irish alphabet is therefore no fiction subsequent to the arrival of St. Patrick.

Its arrangement, viz. *B, L, N, &c.* is another mark of its antiquity, for we all know that the arrangement of the Roman alphabet is quite different. When St. Patrick had introduced the Roman language and letters, the Roman arrangement of the alphabet prevailed, and this was the only alteration the Irish alphabet underwent.

The names of the Irish letters, viz. *Ailm*, an elm; *Beth*, a birch; *Coll*, a hazle; *Duir*, an oak; *Eadha*, an aspen-tree; *Fearn*, an alder-tree; *Gort*, an ivy-tree; *Jodha*, a yew-tree; *Luis*, a quicken-tree; *Muin*, a vine; *Nuin*, an ash; *Oir*, a spindle-tree; *Pieth-Bhog*, not translated by the Irish grammarians. *Teine*, not translated; *U*, heath; *Uath* (the aspirate *h*) a white thorn-tree. Of these letters, *Beth*, *Jodha*, *Muin*, and *Nuin*, bear a marked affinity to the Hebrew—*Beth*, *Jod*, *Mem*, and *Nun*, as well as to the Greek—*Beta*, *Jota*, *Mu*, and *Nu*. The idea is so original, that this alphabet is considered as a wood, and the letters as trees, that the Irish could not possibly have borrowed it from any nation in the world. Another mark of antiquity is, that the meaning of *Pieth-Bhog-Suil* and *Teine* are not known, and they are conse-

quently left untranslated by the Irish grammarians. Had this alphabet been a modern fabrication, there could have been no difficulty in assigning a signification to these, as well as to the rest. It also possesses this peculiarity, in common with the Hebrew alphabet, that the name of every letter is significant and expressive*.

But the strongest proof of the antiquity of the use of letters among the Celts is, that they have only one letter more (F), than the letters of Cadmus. The Greeks, till the siege of Troy, had the same number, introduced by Cadmus. If the Celts borrowed their alphabet from the Greeks, they must have done it prior to the siege of Troy, when the Celtic, Grecian, and Phœnician letters, were the same. If borrowed at an after period, their alphabet would have been more numerous, and hence we conclude it as old as the siege of Troy.

If, as some have surmised, the use of letters was taught by Adam or Enoch, this knowledge, at the dispersion, would be carried away by those of mankind who moved north, as well as those who proceeded to the east, the south, or west of Babel; and supposing this invaluable art was only found out after the dispersion, it would even then be

* See Mr. Huddleston's dissertation on the antiquity of the use of letters among the Celts, p. 389, 390, 391, 396. Those who wish more information upon this subject, may consult the *Notes* of that learned and impartial antiquarian.

communicated by degrees to those tribes that lay most remote, especially, if there was any intercourse by trade. This was evidently the case with regard to the inhabitants of these islands*. At a very early period, the Phœnicians, coasting along the shores of the Mediterranean, made settlements in the isles of Cyprus and Rhodes, and extending their navigation, passed successively into Greece, Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia; nor did the southern parts of Gaul and Spain escape them. About 1260 years before the Christian era, instigated by the love of gain, they entered the ocean, and landed on the western coast of Spain. That country is said to have presented them the same spectacle that America, in the sixteenth century, did to the Spaniards. Though destitute of arts and industry, the inhabitants had abundance of gold and silver; with the value of which they seemed so little acquainted, that they exchanged them freely for oil, glass, and other trinkets. Silver, in particular, was so plentiful, that the Phœnicians, unable to convey away all they had obtained, were obliged to take out the lead with which their anchors were loaded, and put that metal in its place. From Spain and the northern parts of Gaul, they visited Great Britain and Ireland.

But, to return to our intended discussion, Mr.

* See Rutherford's *View of Ancient History*.

Laing, after having, as he imagines, completely deprived the poems of all pretensions to antiquity, then gives a real account of their origin, which he pretends cannot be very remote, on account of the many modern terms they contain, and the similarity of numberless passages to the writings of ancient and modern poets. At last he would persuade us, that Mr. M'Pherson was not only the author, but publicly avowed it. Mr. Laing would likewise persuade us, that religion is essential to epic poetry; and that the silence of Ossian's compositions, in this respect, is a strong proof against their authenticity.

The notions of the northern tribes, in general, were not so absurd. At the dispersion, they carried with them the religion of Noah and his immediate descendants. Their only temples were woods or groves, where they worshipped the Supreme Lord of the Universe. It is evident, the partial favour of such a being must always preponderate, and consequently detract from the merits of the conqueror. The Celtic bard, therefore, kept heavenly agency out of sight, and left the victory to be decided by the strength, prowess, and superior address of the combatants.

Mr. Laing would likewise persuade us, that in Ossian's time, the Caledonians, having no other vessels but what were made of wickers, covered with hides, could not navigate the seas, nor pass into different parts, as described in these poems.

Ship-building, though as old, and probably more so, than the building of Noah's ark, has been many ages in arriving at its present perfection. That at the period we are speaking of, there were small craft made of wickers, covered with skins, we do not deny, since such have till lately been in use. But Mr. Laing might as well endeavour to persuade a person, ignorant of the maritime skill of this country, that because cock-boats ply in our rivers and along our coasts, there are no larger vessels to transport us to the East and West Indies. Tacitus does not mention that any intercourse subsisted between the north of Scotland and Scandinavia, or that the vessels of the Highlanders were provided with sails. Mr. Laing concludes, that they never passed into Scandinavia in a single ship, nor had any vessels capable to carry them over, although it is allowed, on all hands, that the Highlanders, were in the constant habit of passing from the main land to the islands, and to the north of Ireland; and any one acquainted with the tempestuous seas which lash the northern coasts of Scotland and Ireland, will be convinced that a vessel capable of living in them, would have little to fear in crossing over to the mouth of the Baltic. Such are the conclusive detections from the Roman history and middle ages.

Mr. Laing divides his detections (so he terms his objections) into eight general heads, under

which he introduces numerous minute detections.

Mr. Laing's first detection is from the Roman history of Britain, whence he deduces, as an historical fact, that there was not a Highlander in Scotland, of the present race, at the beginning of the æra assigned to Fingal. The proofs which he produces for this formidable fact are, that some Irish historians fix the arrival of the Scots in this island at fifty years later than the æra assigned to Fingal; and that this account is supported by a number of concurring testimonies; among which are particularly pointed out, the indisputable opinions of Whitaker and Pinkerton. Whether the *immaculate* truth of the Irish fabulous historians, and the *unimpeachable* accuracy of Messrs. Whitaker and Pinkerton, might not admit of some question, we shall leave it to our readers to decide. Yet we shall state a few considerations which induce us to believe, that the very same race who possess the country to the north of the Grampians, were its possessors far beyond any date assigned even by fabulous records, that the Gael or Caledonians, are the same race who inhabited the Highlands of Scotland, time immemorial, and that they are entirely distinct from the Scots, appears from the following considerations.

1. The Gael and Scots differ from each other in their language, manners, customs, superstitions, prejudices, and traditions.
2. Among the Scots,

their country is universally known by the name Scotland; they have no other name for their own race than the Scots. Scot is a very general proper name, and is often incorporated with the name of places. 3. Among the Gael, on the other hand, the term Scot is utterly unknown; they never call themselves by this name, they never call their country Scotland. Scot is never used as a proper name among the pure Highlanders; nor does the appellation of a single town, valley, or river, shew that it was known to their language. Buchanan expresses his surprise at this strange circumstance, that one half of the nation should completely have forgotten its own name. 4. The Highlanders universally call themselves the Gael, their own nation Gaeltachd; the kingdom of Scotland at large, they know only by the name Albin (Albion), and its inhabitants by the name of Albanich, the term of Albin is employed as a proper name, and it is often incorporated with the name of places, Bredalbin, &c. 5. On the other hand, the word Albin, or Albion, is utterly unknown among the common people of the Scots, who have not learnt it from books, or from their northern neighbours. 6. The natural inference from these circumstances is, that the Gael and Scots, are a distinct race; that the Gael are the race who possessed Caledonia in the time of the Romans, and Albin in the time of the Greeks. These observations, drawn from circumstances of which every one may

ascertain the truth, must appear more convincing than the unsupported conjectures of a few fabulous historians.

The other detections from the Roman history contain such a tissue of gratuitous suppositions and misrepresentations, as we have rarely seen introduced into any controversy. Fingal is supposed to have fought with *Caracalla*, in the year 208; and because some Irish historians fix the date of another battle, in which he was engaged, to near a century afterwards, this is to be considered as absurdity; which forms an undeniable detection of Ossian. Had these very accurate historians (the redoubtable supporters of a millenium of fabulous kings), placed the two battles five centuries asunder, we should consider it much the same in regard to the decision of the question. The mention of the name of *Caracalla* in the poems of Ossian, is another detection of the same class.

The absurdity, says Mr. Laing, was remarked by Gibbon, that the Highland bard should describe the Son of Severus by a nick-name, invented four years afterwards, after the battle in 208; scarcely used by the Romans themselves till after the death of that emperor, and seldom mentioned by the most ancient historians. Now, with due deference to Mr. Gibbon, be it remarked, that this battle took place in Fingal's youth, before his marriage with Ossian's mother; and that Ossian composed his

poems in his old age, after all his numerous relations and friends of his youth had gone to the halls of their fathers. "The name *Caracalla* must, therefore, have been common over the whole Roman empire, long before the poem where it is mentioned was written; it had even been used by historians, who look upon the use of a nick-name as inconsistent with the dignity of their writings, till after it has been long sanctioned by common usage." The name *Caracalla* could, besides, be easily assimilated to the usual Gaelic appellations; and by the easy conversion which Ossian adopts, in *Caracul*, it was, according to the common usage of the Gaels, made to denote a person of quality (*Garg-shuil*), terrible eye. The name *Antonius* was altogether different from any thing in the Gaelic language, nor could any meaning be attached to it; and had not the familiar sound of *Caracalla* occurred, Ossian would only have distinguished this prince by his well known title, *Son of the King of the world*. Had Ossian been made to employ the term *Antonius*, it would have been indeed a detection.

The succeeding detections from the Roman history, are still more unfair. Mr. M'Pherson gives certain gratuitous interpretations to support the allusions in Ossian. Mr. Laing undertakes to prove these interpretations to be absurd: the poem must therefore be a forgery. Fingal turned from battle. Mr. M'Pherson supposes it was

from the Roman province. Mr. Laing is positive he must mean Valentia; and that the poem must be an ignorant forgery, because the province of Valentia did not then exist. In the same manner, Ossian mentions Caros as securing himself behind his gathered heap. Mr. M'Pherson supposes Caros to denote the usurper Carusius, and the gathered heap the wall of Agricola, which he alleges Carusius repaired. Mr. Laing asserts, that Agricola did not erect a wall, but merely a chain of forts, and that Carusius consequently did not repair this wall. It would not have required much candour to perceive that Ossian's gathered heap might allude to the entrenchments of a camp, or indeed to any fortification, quite as well as to the wall of Agricola.

Another class of detections is from tradition; and here Mr. Laing thinks he has Ossian fairly, because Mallet and Hume seem to be of his opinion. Mallet may be perfectly correct, when he affirms that the common class of mankind never bestow a thought on any of their progenitors, beyond their grandfathers; but had he been in the smallest degree acquainted with the manners of the Highlanders of Scotland, he would have known that the most common peasant of the pure and unmixed race, can always count at least six or seven generations back; and that this knowledge of his ancestors is his proudest boast; and that the genealogy of the chieftains was in parti-

cular, preserved with the most scrupulous veneration. Among such a people, were the poems which celebrated the most glorious actions of their ancestors likely to be consigned to neglect?

Hume alleges it to be utterly impossible, that so many verses could have been preserved by oral tradition, during fifty generations, among a rude and uncivilized people; and adds, in support of this opinion, his famous dogma, that where a supposition is so contrary to common sense (in other words, common experience), any positive evidence of it ought never to be regarded. Hume probably uttered this opinion before he was taught, by Campbell's *Essay on Miracles*, that positive evidence is sufficient to prove the most positive dogma of the most subtile sophist, to be positive nonsense. It is remarkable that such sagacious inquirers as Mr. Hume and Mr. Laing, should not have perceived that the rudeness of the Highlanders, which they so much insist upon, is the strongest circumstance against their argument. If songs, recounting the exploits of their ancestors, can be preserved for a long course of years in any nation, surely it is among people who account warlike glory the only object of ambition; who look upon their ancestors with veneration; who have no intercourse, no change of objects to awaken their passions, and distract their attention; who, in the intervals of repose, recite their heroic songs as the highest enjoyment of their

convivial hours; who have a peculiar class of the nation, *their bards*, set apart for this express purpose, and valued according to the number of those songs which they can recite. Such were the Highlanders of Scotland till a very late period, yet Mr. Laing thinks it utterly absurd to suppose that so many verses could have been preserved by memory among them, when we meet no such thing in the civilized world among people whose attention is distracted by a thousand cares and a thousand pleasures, and are regardless of committing to memory what they can at any time have recourse to in a printed book. But he should have been more sure of facts, before he asserted that such stretches of memory had not occurred in the civilized world. He should have known, that previous to the invention of printing, not only many thousand verses, but even long prose discourses of celebrated orators were committed to memory. The Scaligers, even in modern times, were not the only German scholars who could repeat the *Æneid* and *Iliad*. Even in regard to the *Psalms*, Mr. Laing asserts a very small portion has ever been committed to memory: he should have extended his inquiry to the old Scottish dissenters, and among them he would have found many who could not only repeat the *Psalms* of David, but a large portion of the *Old* and *New Testament*.

Mr. Laing observes, from the mutability of lan-

guage, that the Gaelic language has undergone great changes, he considers as proved, by its difference from the present Irish, a page of which, a few centuries old, is confessedly unintelligible to the people at present. He adds, that their preservation, in an obsolete dialect, was impossible, as people would naturally, for old words, substitute those more familiar to them.

It is a pity that Mr. Laing's ignorance, in this matter, should mislead his ingenuity; for had he been capable of comparing the Irish and the Gaelic languages, he would have discovered that the former differs from the latter, chiefly in having a greater admixture of Saxon words and idioms; and from the fact, that the Irish of two centuries ago, approaches much nearer to the present Gaelic, than to the present Irish; otherwise he would be led to conclude that the Gaelic has remained uncorrupted, while the Irish has undergone great changes. With regard to the language of Ossian being obsolete, it in fact appears so only in those parts of the Highlands where the original language is most corrupted. The superior purity of the diction, tends only to make a deeper impression on the memories of the people, in all the poems of Ossian.

The immense shoals of barbarians who poured into Italy, and remained there after the decline of the Roman empire, quite changed the Latin tongue, though long brought to perfection, and

enriched with innumerable books, and transformed it gradually into the present Italian. Almost every language in Europe has, from similar causes, in a greater or less degree, undergone the same metamorphosis. The English itself, is a farrago of as many languages as there have been invaders. So that, from the ancient British, it is become a mixture of Saxon, Teutonic, Dutch, Danish, Norman, and modern French, interlarded with Latin and Greek. The Welch continuing an unmixed people, kept their original speech. So have the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides: unconquered, and free from the influx of strangers, their language, for ages, continued the same.

But the most remarkable of Mr. Laing's assertions, is an affirmation that there never was a Druid in Scotland; for the refutation of this assertion, it is not necessary to have recourse to the legends of fabulous historians; the name *Druid* is of Celtic origin; the traditional knowledge of that order is universal, and the Druidical temples, the circle of large stones placed on one end, with a flat one in the middle, every where meet the traveller, in his excursions through the Highlands. We need only refer Mr. Laing to a very perfect one, which is to be seen in the pleasure grounds of Lord Breadalbane, at Taymouth. Against this direct evidence, our author's only ground for his assertion is, that Tacitus makes no ex-

press mention of the Druids, in the wars of Galgacus.

Mr. Laing asserts, that of the numerous attestations of those who have heard, or remembered to have known the originals, none, it is observable, ever presumed to assert that they possessed them in writing, much less that they originally furnished a single fragment of the poems which Mr. M'Pherson had translated.

We are at a loss to determine whether our author has ever read Dr. Blairs *Appendix* to the *Dissertation on Ossian*, or whether he wilfully misrepresents it. When any one peruses the respectable list of clergymen and gentlemen mentioned in that *Appendix*, and compares the facts they attest, with this affirmation of Mr. Laing, what degree of credit will he account due to the fidelity of our historian: moreover, the collection of documents published by the Highland Society of Scotland, might convince the most incredulous sceptic.

We cannot help remarking a very characteristic trait in Mr. Laing's method of disputation. He passes in silence over the numerous attestations we have mentioned, and under this head only brings forward the testimonies of a few English and Irish travellers—a schoolmaster, who died while a young man, and the author of a Gaelic dictionary, whose gross blunders are laughed at by every Gaelic scholar. These persons, he

tells us, only found a few trifling poems, and, therefore, no more were to be found.

Whether such testimonies are to be preferred to these learned and respectable men, living on the spot, and conversant with the language and antiquities, we leave our readers to judge. That such inquirers as Mr. Laing mentions, should have found poems, would certainly have been a matter of surprise.

We are now come to that argument which Mr. Laing had already expatiated upon in the third volume of his history, and which he reckoned altogether decisive, independent of any other. From the manners and customs of the age in which Ossian is said to have lived, he accounts it impossible that the poems attributed to him, could have been then produced. Mr. Laing's assertion, with regard to the horrible barbarity of the Highlanders in the third century, are, indeed, sufficiently positive; but had he taken the trouble to enquire into the ancient manners and state of that people, he would not have been put to the miserable shift of quoting what Dr. Johnson, in his tour, says of their manners a hundred years ago, to prove his own assertions, with regard to their situation fourteen hundred years prior to that period. The impossibility that the sentiments and manners described in *Ossian's Poems*, could have belonged to the Highlanders of the third century, Mr. Laing deduces from his ideas of the manners

which correspond to the state of society in which they were then placed, and from the absurdity of supposing that the people should have become more barbarous, as they approached to civilization.

In picturing out the Highlanders of the third century, we conceive our author had before his eyes a very different idea of manners from that which existed among them. If there be any state of society, previous to the introduction of artificial manners, in which the good principles of the human heart are more frequently called into action than the bad, it is in the pastoral state. Those harassing fears of want, which perpetually haunt a nation subsisting wholly by the chase, have now given place to the ideas of property, in the comforts of a more fixed abode. As individuals have now more leisure, Love, the most prominent passion of the human heart, begins to unfold itself in all its power. As the patriarchal government still prevails, and distinct ideas of separate property have not yet been introduced among the individuals of the same family, filial respect, and the endearing attachments of kindred, are their prevailing and habitual sentiments. The effects of these harmonising sentiments are seen, even in their contests with the neighbouring tribes, and as the love of fame, rather than the gratification of avarice or ambition, is their chief motive for the combat, the vanquished captive is usually

released. In such a state of society, a remarkable humanity of manners has ever been found to prevail, unless some particular circumstance, of a contrary tendency, occurred. Such was the golden age, the Saturnian reign of the ancients; such was the condition of the peaceable, amorous, and poetical Arcadians; such were the manners of the Jewish patriarchs, and of the Gael, in the days of Ossian.

Ossian himself, a prince, a renowned warrior, was a still more renowned poet. In his latter years, after all his race, all the companions of his youth had fallen, his only consolation was to recite his sorrows, and his former scenes of pleasure, to his harp. When we consider all these circumstances, surely it is in such a state of society, and from such a poet, that we may expect an uniform heroism, unknown to barbarians; a gallantry, which chivalry never inspired; a humanity which refinement has never equalled, and a poetry tender and sublime.

If we allow for the effect of these peculiar circumstances in which the Gael were placed, we shall find that the general tone of their manners corresponded, in a striking degree, with those of the Jewish patriarchs; a remarkable humanity and generosity of sentiment; a particular warmth in all the attachments of kindred; and a refined delicacy in the intercourse of the sexes, are characteristic of both. What hero and heroine of romance,

could be more chaste, more delicate, and constant in their attachment than Isaac and Rebecca. But Mr. Laing seems to think the existence of such refined sentiments, in such a state of society, so utterly impossible, that no positive evidence should be received in support of it; we may, therefore, soon expect another ingenious dissertation, to prove that the writings of Moses are also a forgery of the nineteenth century.

The absurdity which Mr. Laing so triumphantly insists upon, in the idea that the Highlanders should have become more barbarous as they approached to civilization, would probably have disappeared, had he been anxious to come at the truth, rather than establish a theory. Are there not in history, numerous instances of nations who had attained to a great degree of humanity, gentleness, and refinement, becoming even suddenly rude and ferocious to a great degree, in consequence of strong excitements being presented to the worst principles of their nature. Will not Mr. Laing allow that the nation, among whom the gallant and polite court of Edward the Third could arise, where the ideas of freedom and equal rights had begun to blossom; where men of wit and learning (a Chaucer), and many other poets flourished. Will he not allow that this nation had become more barbarous during the struggles of York and Lancaster, when literature was utterly extinguished, and the whole kingdom pre-

sented one scene of rapine and bloodshed? Would not the horrid atrocities produced by the restless ambition of a Sylla and Marius, have made an industrious, temperate, patriotic Roman of the age of Cincinnatus shudder. Have we not in our own time seen a people, who boasted of being the most polite and refined that the world ever produced, suddenly hurried into the most rude and savage acts, by the strong excitements presented to their avarice, ambition, and revenge.

A copious and curious source of detection of Mr. Laing, is the constant imitation of the classics, scriptures, and such temporary publications as were then in vogue.

To enter into an examination in detail of the instances of imitation which our author adduces, would exceed our limits, and be equally tedious and useless. There is nothing strange or impossible in two writers using similar comparisons, "Thus, like as the lion growleth, even the young lion over his prey, though the whole company of shepherds be called together against him; at their voice he will not be terrified, nor at their tumult will he be humbled *.

Bishop Lowth observes this comparison is exactly in the same spirit and manner, and very nearly approaching to the expression of Homer. "As the bold lion, mountain-bred, now long fa-

* Isaiah, chap. xxxi. 4.

mished, with courage and with hunger stung, attempts the thronged fold; him nought appals, though dogs and armed shepherds stand in guard collected; he, nathless, undaunted, springs o'er the high fence, and rends the trembling prey."

The learned bishop brings in a number of similar instances where the prophet resembles the Greek and Latin poets; we mention this, because Mr. Laing pretends there is no resemblance between the sacred and prophane writers of antiquity.

In the beginning of the sixth book of Fingal, Ossian thus addresses an old deceased friend, "Be thy soul blest, O Carril, in the midst of thy eddying winds; O that thou wouldest come to my hall, when I am alone by night! I hear often thy light hand on my harp; when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear, why dost not thou speak to me in my grief, and tell me when I shall behold my friends."

Did Kotzebue bear this passage in mind, when raving of his dead wife, he exclaims, "when I am thus alone; my Frederica seems with me. I talk to her as though she were present, and pour out to her all my heart. Ah! perhaps she may be really present! perhaps she may hover about me as my guardian angel! Ah! why does she not appear for one moment, to give assurance to her existence."

Would our limits permit, we might amuse our

readers with several curious blunders into which Mr. Laing is led by his rage for etymologies, and his ignorance of the language he attempts to criticise. In the word *cliadh*, Mr. Laing has been widely misled by his ignorance of the Gaelic language. In the first place, he has confounded *cliadh* and *eliabh*, two words of a very different signification. *Cliadh* signifies a hurdle, a plain piece of wicker work, on which was usual to thicken raw cloths, and were occasionally employed to shut the entrance of sheep cots. A harrow is in the same manner called *cliadh*, *chiadhtha*, from its being formed of cross bars, like chequer work. This is the word which Mr. Laing assures us is literally the same with the Latin *Cista*, both in original meaning and metaphor. The word *eliabh*, for which he evidently mistook the other, denotes any thing made of twigs, bent in a circular form, such as a basket; and from a similar bending of the ribs, the human breast. This metaphor, our author looks upon as exactly the same with that by which the words chest and trunk are applied to the same part, although the latter evidently alludes to the close and hollow form of the breast. The etymological resemblance between *eliabh* and *cista*, we acknowledge ourselves unable to discover.

Ossian's omission of wolves and bears, is no argument, as Mr. Laing asserts, of modern fabrication. A poet is not a zoologist. It cannot be

expected he should mention all the beasts and birds of the country. He only mentions those which answer his purpose. Neither Homer nor Virgil introduce the rhinoceros, or even the elephant, nor any other ferocious beasts, though inhabitants of the same regions that produce lions and tygers. The Highland bard seldom notices animals. The attention seems wholly occupied with hills, woods, floods, lakes, clouds, storms, the sun, moon, stars, and other magnificent objects of nature. He never compares his heroes in battle to beasts. Man, the most noble and intrepid of creatures, greatly loses instead of gaining, by having his courage put in competition with the savage ferocity of a wolf or bear.

It would be abusing the patience of our readers to repeat, over and over again, the same observations with regard to the other detections from Roman history, and the middle ages. They are all of the same stamp; the candour and modesty of Mr. Laing, keep pace with each other on this occasion. When it suits his purpose, the authority of Solinus, who affirms that no bees exist in Ireland, and who makes the Orkneys three in number, is preferred to that of Tacitus, who must have had his accounts of these islands from the very people employed in the expedition against them.

The Reverend Mr. Rosing, pastor of the Danish church in London, assured Sir John Sinclair,

that in Suhm's *History of Denmark**, a work of great authority, mention is made that "Swaran, the son of Starno, carried on many wars in Ireland, where he vanquished most of the heroes that opposed him, except Cuchullin, who, assisted by the Gaelic or Caledonian king Fingal, not only defeated and took him prisoner, but generously sent him back again into his own country." He further added, that these exploits would never be forgotten, as they were celebrated by the Caledonian poet Ossian, whereby Swaran obtained an honour, denied to many heroes of his country, much more deserving of it.

A pious zealot, John Carswell, in the preface to his *Form of Prayer*, printed in the year 1567, expresses his concern for the neglect of printing the Gaelic language in the following words:—

"We, Gaels of Scotland and Ireland, suffer peculiar loss and inconvenience above any other part of the world, in not having our literature and language printed, as other tribes of men have; and we suffer a greater than all other losses, in not having the *Holy Bible* printed in the Gaelic, as it is printed in Latin, English, and many other tongues: and, besides, we have never had in print the one-fourth of the history or antiquity of our ancestors, although a certain portion of the literature of the Gaels of Scotland and Ireland exists

* See the letters that passed on that subject between Sir John Sinclair, Bishop Cameron, and others, vol. i. p. 40.

in manuscripts, in the possession of bards and teachers and their patrons. Great is the labour of writing by the hand, in comparison of printing, which shortens and speedily furnishes whatever is done by it, however great; and great is the blindness, and sinful darkness, and ignorance, of those who teach, and write, and compose in Gaelic, in exhibiting much more attention, and showing more anxiety to preserve the vain, extravagant, false, and worldly histories of the *Tuath-de-Danans* and *Milesians*—of the heroes of *Fingal*, the son of *Comhal*—of the *Fingalians*—and of many others, which I shall not here mention, nor name, nor attempt to examine.” The author, from whom these extracts are taken, died in the year 1572. His memory is still preserved, by tradition, in the parish of Kilmartin and in Lorn, where he chiefly resided. The bards to whom he bore no goodwill, made him, in return, the subject of their satirical verses and invectives.

We have an invincible proof from the preface of this man, that the bards were no strangers to literature; and that Ossian’s poems and the *Fingalians* were held in great esteem at that period.

Selma, the famous palace of Fingal, was situated in that part of Argyleshire called Upper-Lorn, upon a high eminence of an oblong form, which, near the sea-shore, rises at equal distances from the mouths of the lakes *Etive* and *Creran*. On the top of this hill are still to be seen vestiges

of extensive buildings. The following, from a poem of Ossian, translated by Dr. Smith, is very descriptive of the place, "The chase had ceased, and the deer slept under the shadow of the trees on the moss; the curtain of night descended on the hills, and heroes were feasting in Selma. There was song after song, as the custom was, and the music of harps, with the barking of dogs, in the interval of action, from the rock which rises over the white beach."

The beach here mentioned answers exactly the present aspect of the white sand that covers the shore, around part of the hill on which *Selma* stood. There are two rocks, from either of which the dogs might be heard to bark; but one rises considerably higher than the other, and is known to the inhabitants by the name of *Dun-Bhaile-an-righ*, or the hill of the king's town. Between these two eminences stood the city of *Beregonium*; in Fingal's days the capital of all the Highlands. A street paved with common stones, running from the foot of the one hill to the other, is still called *Straid-a-mhargaidh*, "the market-street;" and another place, at a little distance, goes by the name of *Straid-na-min*, "the meal-street." About twenty years ago, a man cutting turf in the neighbourhood, found at the depth of five feet below the surface, one of the wooden pipes that conveyed water to the town. This shews that the natives of these times had better notions of convenience than some are willing to grant them.

Selma, in Fingal's time, by lightning, or some other accident, was destroyed by fire. Ossian, who had seen it in its glory, thus describes it in ruins.

“And thou, *Selma*, house of my delight; is this heap thy old ruins, where the thistle, the heath, and the rank grass, are mourning under the drop of night*.”

We are likewise told, that a few years ago, one of the tenants of an adjoining farm, while digging for stones near the hill of *Selma*, discovered a stone-coffin, which contained human bones of more than an ordinary size. Several other relicts of antiquity have, at different times, been found near this place.

The king of Morven had other places of residence. On the side of Glen-Almon, Perthshire, there is a small hamlet, named *Fian-Theach*, or Fingal's hall. After this, at the west end of *Loch-Fraoch*, in a place called *Dail-chillin*, he is said to be buried. If so, Ossian, in his latter days, dwelt not far distant from that spot; for in the fifth Duan, verse 437, of the following poem, he describes himself as repairing daily to his father's tomb, feeling it with his hands, and uttering the most tender lamentations. There we may, likewise, suppose he died; for, till about sixty years ago, his sepulchre was to be seen on the opposite

* See Dr. Smith's *Death of Gaul*, verse 83.

side of the same valley, at a place called *Clach-Oisian*, or the monumental stone of Ossian. This thick and ponderous mass, measuring seven feet and a half in length, by five in breadth, the soldiers employed by General Slade, to make roads through the Highlands, removed with engines. Under it they found a coffin, formed, as often mentioned in Gaelic poetry, of four gray stones, containing some bones. It was the intention of the officer, who commanded the party, to let the bones remain within the sepulchre, in the same position in which they were found, till the general should see them, or his mind be known on the subject; but the people of the country, venerating the memory of their immortal bard, rose, by one consent, to the number of seventy or eighty men, and with bagpipes playing, and other funeral rites, conveyed away his relics, and with much solemnity deposited them on the summit of a hill, difficult of access; where, sequestered, they might repose, no more liable to be disturbed by the feet or hands of any mortal. Some alive, at least till lately, attest the truth of this fact, and point out the sacred sepulchre of the son of Fingal.

That these poems are a forgery, is an assertion advanced by few, and is sufficiently obviated by the irresistible fact, that many of them are still repeated in the original Gaelic, in most parts of the Highlands of Scotland. If these poems were composed by Mr. M'Pherson, who published only a

translation of them, by what means did the Highlanders become possessed of the originals? The style and manner of the poems is such as could have entered into no human head these thousand years past. But should we even admit that Mr. M'Pherson used some unwarrantable freedoms, it will no more invalidate the authenticity of these poems, than the ignorance or incandour of a translator would invalidate the authenticity of any other ancient work. This argument will not apply to Dr. Smith and others, who published the originals along with the translations.

That these poems are the work of Ossian is clear from their internal evidence. His own history is almost uniformly interwoven with that of the heroes and great events which he celebrates. Had these poems been composed during the fifteenth century, what could have induced to transfer his fame to another? The inhabitants of the Highlands and islands of Scotland, amounting to upwards of half a million of people, unanimously ascribe these poems to Ossian. Can the utmost pitch of human credulity imagine that half a million of people would be unanimous in maintaining a falsehood, or that any consideration, short of truth, could induce them to ascribe the most valuable, the most exalted, and the most esteemed, of their ancient poetry, to a mere non-entity? More than a thousand places in the Highlands take their names from Fingal's heroes (*Cothron na Fienne*), the

combat of Fingalians, so often mentioned by Ossian, is a phrase so common in the Highlands, that if only two boys wrestle, the spectators proclaim fair play, by crying *Cothrom na Feinne dhoibh*—let them have the equal combat of the Fingalians. A strong man is often called a *Cuchullin* (*Co laidir ri Cuchullin*.) A man of a haughty imperious temper, a *Garbh mac Stairn*: Swaran, the son of Starno; an insidious fellow, a *Conan duine*, &c. Many passages of Ossian have, from time immemorial, got into the language of the Highlanders, in the form of maxims or proverbs. *Cha do dhochainn Fionn namh a gheill*, i. e. "Fingal never injured a vanquished foe." *Cha d' thug Fionn riamh blar, nach do thairg an tuis Cumha*, i. e. "Fingal never fought, without offering first a reward," is a common saying of the Highlanders, to recommend a merciful disposition. The Editors, were it necessary, could adduce hundreds of instances more, which are proverbs relating to Fingal and his heroes.

These poems were collected from oral recitation, and many of the poems in Mr. M'Pherson's compilation, are still repeated in the Highlands in the original; hence the recent idea of their being a recent forgery, is the most desperate of all arguments. That the best and most valuable of these poems is ascribed to Ossian, by the Scottish Gael, is unquestionable. When they so profoundly respected the productions themselves, as to

preserve them by oral recitation, during fifteen centuries, was it so difficult a matter to preserve the name of their author. In this case, they had neither difficulty to encounter on the one hand, nor prejudice to induce them on the other, to ascribe these poems to a fictitious author. The single name of Ossian was no great burthen to the memory; and it is the most absurd and unreasonable of arguments, that the Gael, who set such a value on these poems, and preserved them for so many centuries, should at last throw them away, by ascribing them to a non-entity. The people among whom he lived, by whom his heroes are still held in the highest esteem, and by whom his works were preserved, are certainly the best judges of the matter; and their uniform testimony that Ossian was the author of the poems in question, is sufficient proof of their authenticity. The last argument we shall advert to, is that so often urged—that had these poems been composed upwards of fifteen centuries ago, they would long since have been lost or unintelligible, owing to the natural lapse and alteration of language, and the difficulty of retaining them. But there was no difficulty in preserving these poems; men of the present day approach the merits of this argument, with their minds greatly bemisted. We can have no adequate idea of the gigantic efforts of memory, prior to the invention of letters; and this is the reason why verse preceded prose in all na-

tions, because the former is more easily retained than the latter. Even in the present age, when the memory is less exerted, owing to the aids of printing and writing, many a school-boy, by the time he is twelve years old, has committed to memory more than the length of the poems of Ossian. Can they then be supposed an impracticable task to an order of men, who made repetition their whole study and employment. As to these poems becoming unintelligible in a long series of years, no such thing could happen so long as these poems were not committed to writing: oral recitations always conform to the pronunciation of the day, and have not the difficulties and innovations of orthography to contend with. The same order of men who preserved them, and communicated them to their successors in office, or repeated them daily in the halls of their chieftains, would explain any word or phrase, which might chance to become obsolete. Indeed poems so regular, and often repeated, could not, in the very nature of things, become unintelligible. The task of committing these poems to memory, is an effort to which even children, in the present age, are adequate, as we have already shewn; and as to the language becoming unintelligible, it is a thing simply impossible, in any great and popular work, held in such high estimation, and daily repeated in every family of the Scottish Gael.

As the Editors offer to the public these ancient

poems, they have been challenged, with all the exultation of superior virtue, and conscious truth to this discussion. Poor Pinkerton exhibited, in his hideous aspect, all that rancour could invent, or vulgarity and audacity could utter: he polluted the annals of history with such detestable falsehoods, in what he advanced concerning Ossian and Caledonia, some passages of which were sufficient to excite aversion in a kraal of Hottentots. In the performance of his part, he resembles some stupid injudicious actor, to whom a piece of low humour is assigned, which he so abominably out-herods, as to become intolerable even to the upper galleries, by whom he is pelted off the stage, amidst the groans and hisses of the people. In his nauseous tract we decline to follow, for here even victory were disgrace, and the laurels like those acquired in wrestling with a chimney sweep. Therefore, we shall allow his arguments, regarding the Highlanders, to remain a venemous bog of filthy slanders—a monument of derision and contempt to succeeding ages.

Dr. Johnson founded his objections on a few superficial enquiries. Mr. Laing admits that his arguments may be easily answered. Pinkerton assigns a longevity of more than three centuries, and the objections of others are equally inconsistent and trivial. The truth is that nothing will satisfy these sceptics, unless we raise up from the dead fifty generations, to prove in what manner

these poems were preserved by oral recitation. Were this mode of proof in our power, the next disingenuous shift would be to exclaim with Dr. Johnson, that these fifty generations preferred Scotland to truth.

Mr. Laing's pretended detections have been sufficiently answered, as far as the limits of this work will permit; we shall offer no farther remarks upon the subject, especially, since the gentleman himself, after bringing what he calls incontrovertible arguments, owns, at the end, they may be easily answered. What could induce him to make this concession, we are at a loss to conjecture; unless, upon reading them over again, they did not appear so conclusive as he at first imagined.

As for Mr. Laing's arguments, wherewith he has attempted to discredit *Ossian's Poems*, the attempt could not come more naturally than from Orcadians*. Perhaps the severe checks given by the ancient Caledonians, to their predatory Scandinavian predecessors, raised prejudices not yet extinct. We conceive how an author can write under the influence of prejudice, and not sensible of being acted upon by it. If Mr. Laing will bring forth more arguments in support of his former opinion regarding Ossian, and the ancient customs of the Highlanders, it would become him

* Mr. Laing is a native of the Orkneys.

to go for some time under the tutorage of a school-master in Argyleshire, or some other corner of the land, where he would be taught the proper etymology and orthography of the Gaelic language.

Mr. Laing boasts he has put an end to the dispute for ever; we call upon him now to awake from the multitude of his thoughts: it behoves him not only to return to his national creed (as he terms it), but to make a humble apology, through the medium of the press, and all the amends in his power, for his slanderous misrepresentations and gross errors against the Caledonians—the authenticity of Ossian's poems—and the Gaelic language. By acknowledging his animosity with a publication, he may obtain pardon, as he is still in the land of the living. But, if Mr. Laing will continue obstinate, and keep silent in future regarding this subject, it will be a convincing proof to the public, that his conscience upbraids him for what he has done—that he took flight from the field, never to face his dishonourable and vain arguments. He appeared upon the stage as a prevailing champion; he thought his objections and detections impregnable; and that his quibbles would be fixed as a decision: he has now his choice, to come forth to support his opinion; otherwise, to lie under the reproach of what he has done.

We do not ascribe to Ossian all the poems that are included in the following sheets; we are persuaded that some of them are his productions, and

other ancient bards of Caledonia, which competent judges thought might be edifying to the public, as remains of genius and taste. We shall only here forewarn the indulgent reader, now entering upon the poems, not to be disgusted with the wild and undisciplined method of our Highland bards. For, as the judicious Dr. Blair observed, "The question is not whether a few improprieties may be pointed out in their works; whether this or that passage might not have been worked up with more skill and art by some writer of happier times: a thousand such cold and frivolous criticisms, are altogether undecisive as to their genuine merit. But have they the spirit, the fire, the inspiration of poetry? Do they utter the voice of nature; do they elevate by their sentiments; do they interest by their descriptions; do they paint to the heart as well as to fancy; do they make their readers glow, and tremble, and weep? These are the great characteristics of true poetry; where these are to be found, he must be a minute critic indeed, who can dwell upon slight defects. A few beauties of this high kind, transcend whole volumes of faultless mediocrity. Uncouth and abrupt our bards may sometimes appear, by reason of conciseness; but they are sublime, they are pathetic, in an eminent degree. If they have not the extensive knowledge, the regular dignity of narration, the fulness and accuracy of description, which we find in Homer and Virgil; yet in strength of imagination,

in grandeur of sentiment, in native majesty of passion, they are fully their equal. If they flow not always like a clear stream, yet they break forth often like a torrent of fire. Of art too, they are far from being destitute, and their imagery is remarkable for delicacy as well as strength. Seldom or ever are they trifling or tedious; and if they be thought too melancholy, yet they are always moral. Though their merit were in other respects much less than it is, this alone ought to entitle them to high regard, that their writings are remarkably favourable to virtue. They awake the tenderest sympathies, and inspire the most generous emotions. No reader can rise from them, without being warmed with the sentiments of humanity, virtue, and honour."

Having thus established the authenticity of Ossian, it is high time to put an end to this preface; which, by the tedious discussion of the above, has been spun out to a greater length than was at first intended. From one who offers to the public a few more specimens of ancient Gaelic poetry, perhaps more arguments concerning the authenticity of these poems, would be expected by some, about a question which has been a good deal agitated of late years, whether the poems of Ossian are genuine? To all men of judgment, taste, and candour, who have perused with attention the able and elegant defences of their authenticity, by the learned and pious Re-

verend Hugh Blair, D. D. late of Edinburgh; by the learned and ingenious James M'Pherson, Esq.; by the learned and pious Reverend John Smith, D. D. late of Campbleton; by the learned and pious Reverend Donald M'Nicol, D. D. late of Lismore; by the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair, of Ulbster, baronet; by the learned and pious Reverend Thomas Ross, L. L. D. of Lochbroom; by the learned and pious Reverend Archibald M'Donald, late of Liverpool; by the learned and pious Reverend James Graham, late of Aberfoyle; by the learned and accomplished John Grant, Esq. of Corrimony, advocate; by the learned and ingenious Robert Huddleston, Lunan, &c. with what has been advanced in this preface, any more might justly appear superfluous labour; and probably would not produce, in resolved sceptics, more conviction than the many evidences already mentioned. Those gentlemen, therefore, who take pains after this to satisfy them, might as well give them up with a smile, as the people of Iona did the man who would not believe that ever they had, in that remote country, any cathedral; for this reason, because he could see nothing but the ruins of a building, which, for ought he knew (he said), might never have had a roof upon it.

But we suppose that enough has been said to convince the unprejudiced of the authenticity of Ossian. As to the opposite class, we shall now

take leave of them, persuaded they can do the Celtic bard no real prejudice. The spots in the sun, and eclipses, are mentioned in the most trifling Almanacks; and dogs innocently bark at the moon. We consider Ossian in the light of that good-natured Indian king, who desired his servants, when they were driving away the flies that buzzed about his ears, to let them alone: as they were but creatures of a day, it was cruel, he said, to refuse them their short pastime; adding, that if they amused themselves, they gave little concern to him, since he knew their fate would soon rid him of their trouble. To weigh the merit of what is included in the preceding and following sheets, is not the province of the Editors, but of the public, to whose judgment they submit, and in whose decision they shall acquiesce with the most respectful deference.

DESCRIPTION OF STAFFA.

STAFFA is a very small island, rendered remarkable by its caverns and basaltic columns, which, by naturalists, have been supposed to be more grand than similar objects in any part of the world. This island is about fifteen miles west from Mull, in Argyleshire; its length is one mile, its breadth half a mile, and its form irregular. The whole of this island is basaltic, and the sea having laid the basaltic bare upon the coast, the columns are distinctly visible, and have excited the admiration of all naturalists. Staffa is accessible only in one place, and can be approached only in a small boat. One family were accustomed to reside on it during the whole year, but being terrified by the violence of the western billows, which, as they affirmed, shook the whole island, they chose to reside in Mull during the tempestuous season. More than one half of Staffa exhibits elegant basaltic columns, similar to those composing the Giants' Causeway, in Ireland; but the greatest curiosity is the cave of Fin-

gal, which is mentioned by travellers with enthusiasm.

Concerning this cave, which can be described only by those who have seen it; a few remarks, taken from St. Fond, will not be improper, as this superb monument, of a grand subterraneous combustion (the date of which, says the ingenious traveller, has been lost in the lapse of ages), presents an appearance of order and regularity, so wonderful, that it is difficult for the coldest observer, and the least sensible to the phenomena which relate to the convulsion of the globe, not to be singularly astonished by this prodigy, which may be considered as a sort of natural palace. To shelter myself, he observes, from all critical observation, on the emotion which I experienced, while contemplating the most extraordinary cavern yet known, I shall borrow the expressions of him (Sir Joseph Banks) who first described it. Those who are acquainted with the character of this illustrious naturalist, will not be apt to accuse him of being liable to be hurried away by the force of a too ardent imagination; but the sensation he felt at the view of this magnificent scene, was such, that it was impossible to escape a degree of just enthusiasm. "The impatience which every one felt (says Sir Joseph) to see the wonder we had heard so largely described, prevented our morning rest: every one was up and in motion before the break of day, and with the first light, arrived

at the south-west part of the island, the seat of the most remarkable pillars; where we no sooner arrived, than we were struck with a scene of magnificence, which exceeded our expectation; though formed, as we thought, upon the most sanguine foundations. The whole of that end of the island, supported by ranges of natural pillars, mostly above fifty feet high, standing in natural colonnades, according as the bays or points of the land, formed themselves upon a firm basis of solid rock. In a short time we arrived at the mouth of the cave; the most magnificent, I believe, that ever has been described by travellers. The mind can hardly form an idea more magnificent than such a space, supported, on each side, by ranges of columns, and roofed by the bottoms of those which have been broken off to form it; between the angles of which, a yellow stalagmitic matter has been exuded, which serves to define the angles precisely, and at the same time with a great deal of elegance; and to render it still more agreeable, the whole is lighted from without, and the air is perfectly free from the damp and noxious vapours with which natural caverns in general abound." Let us also listen for a moment to Dr. Von Troil, on the same subject, in his *Letters on Iceland*. "How splendid (says this prelate), do the porticoes of the ancients appear in our eyes, from the ostentatious magnificence of the descriptions we have received of them, and with what admira-

tion are we seized, on seeing even the columns of our modern edifices. But when we behold the cave of Fingal, formed by nature in the island of Staffa, it is no longer possible to make a comparison; and we are forced to acknowledge that this piece of architecture, formed by nature, far surpasses that of the Louvre, that of St. Peter's at Rome, all that remains of Palmyra and Peastum, and all that the genius, the taste, and the luxury of the Greeks were capable of inventing." Such was the impression made by the cave of Fingal on these two naturalists. St. Fond continues, "I have seen many ancient volcanoes, and I have given a description of several superb basaltic causeways, and delightful caverns in the midst of lavas; but I have never found any thing which comes near to this, or can bear any comparison with it, for the admirable regularity of the columns, the height of the arch, the situation, the form, the elegance of this production of nature, or its resemblance to the master pieces of art, though this had no share in its construction; the bottom of the cave is always filled with the sea, and can be entered into with a boat when the water is completely calm; at any other time to enter it would be destruction." The following are the dimensions of the cave:

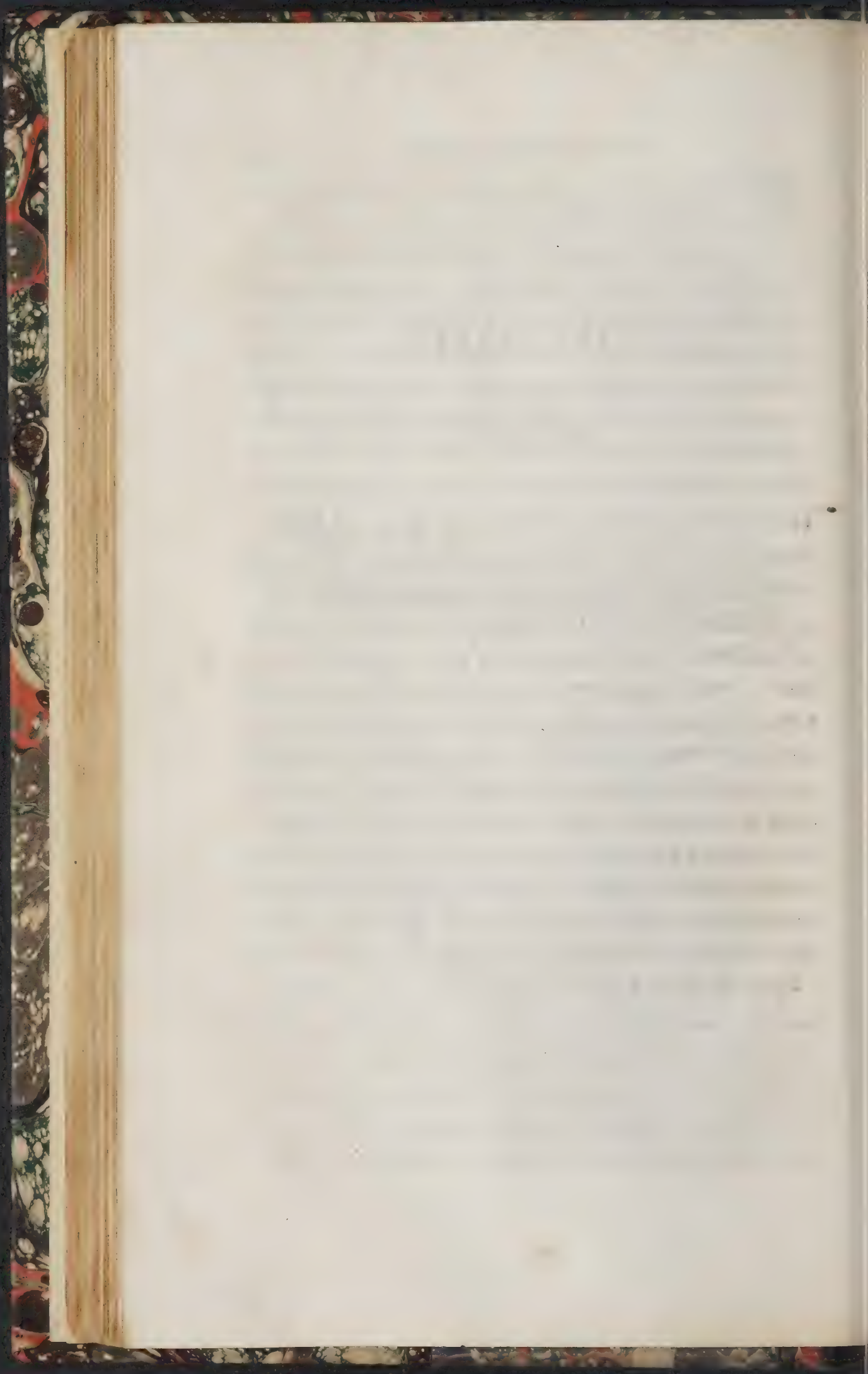
	<i>Fect.</i>	<i>Inches.</i>
Length of the cave from the rock without.....	237	6
Ditto, ditto, from the pitch of the arch.....	250	0
Breadth of ditto at the mouth.....	53	7
Breadth of the cave at the farther end.....	20	0
Height of the arch at the mouth.....	117	6
Ditto, ditto, at the end.....	70	0
Depth of water at the mouth.....	18	0
Ditto at the end.....	9	0
Height of the tallest columns on the right side of the entrance.....	45	0

The Editors being natives of Argyleshire, it was thought proper to insert here, in preference of their own, the description given by foreigners of this superb structure of nature, as they would not be suspected of partiality. No human being who will behold this great and wonderful curiosity, or judge of it from the description, but what must conclude with the words of the queen of Sheba to Solomon—"Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it, and behold the half was not told me." There are other places in the adjacent islands, and immediate neighbourhood of Staffa, highly deserving the attention of the naturalist and philosopher; such as the Corvorant's cave in the island of Staffa; M'Kinnon's cave in Griban; Innis-Kenneth, where the venerable St. Kenneth resided for some time. This beautiful, and much admired island, is visited by the most of travellers when going or coming back from Staffa and Iona; the pilot can point out several other places that

nature has adorned with grandeur to attract the notice of the beholder.

It is handed down by tradition, that it was in Staffa that Fingal's coronation took place, when he was proclaimed king of Morven. And it is not surprising that a renowned prince, of such amiable accomplishments as Fingal, should have selected Staffa for this ceremony, as being the wonder of the whole world. We may mention it as a proof of the superior taste of the present proprietor, Ranald M'Donald, Esq. of Staffa, considering the different possessions which he holds, that it is from Staffa he takes his title.

It is just to acknowledge, in passing, that amongst the many laudable transactions by which the above-named gentleman has distinguished himself in every public affair beneficial to the nation, which has rendered his name conspicuous, and endeared his fame to all that have the pleasure of his acquaintance, or the knowledge of his benevolence, that he has built an excellent inn near Ulva house, well adapted for the accommodation of travellers; where nobility and gentry, visiting Staffa, are entertained with the strictest attention to make them comfortable.



TO THE READER.

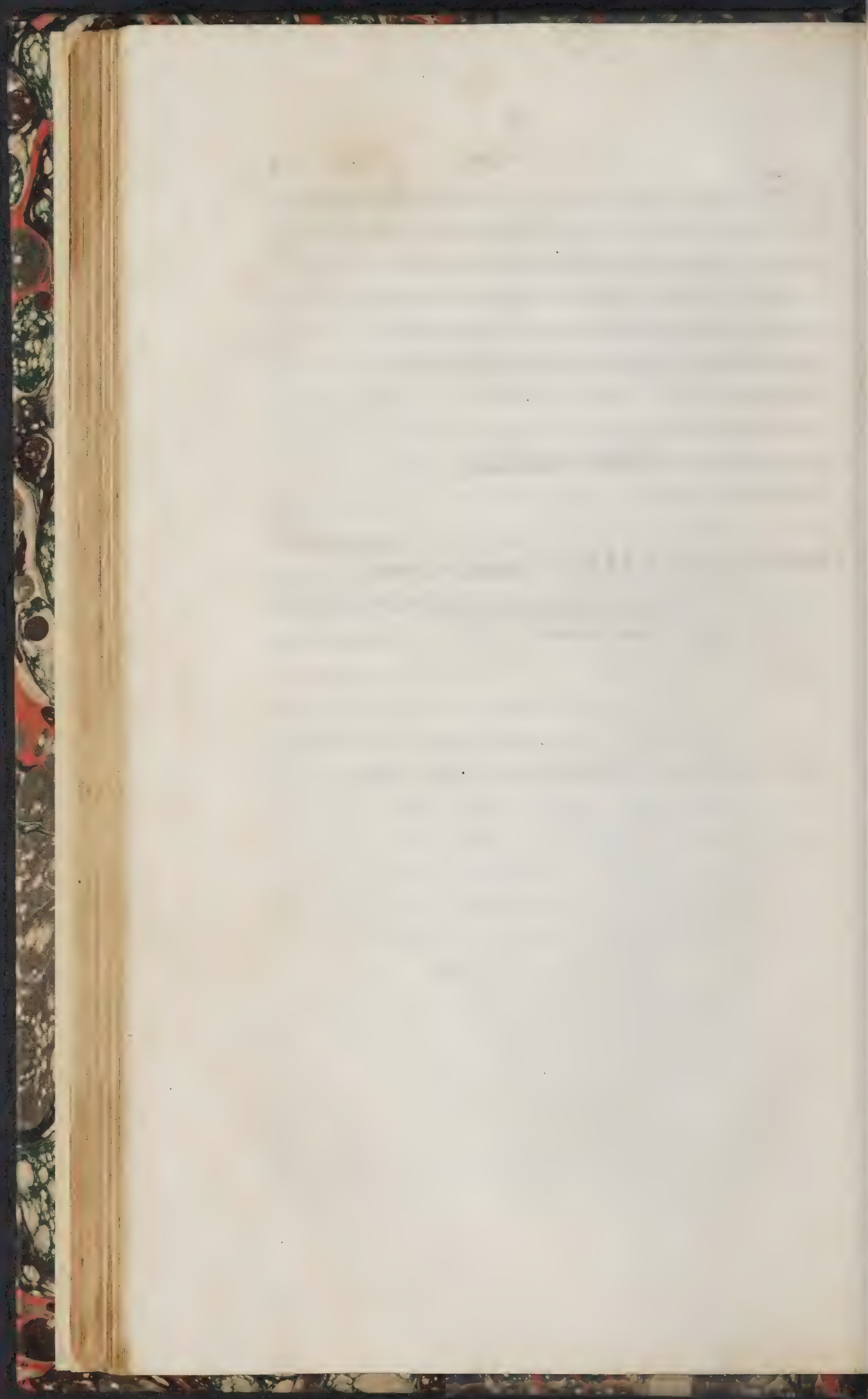
It was deemed proper, by competent judges, to translate the following poems in a literal style; in order that the English reader might be enabled to comprehend as much of the spirit of the original as possible; duly aware, that the subject would lose a great deal of its energy and beauty, if a higher strain of language in the translation was adopted. We can assure our readers that the translation is extremely faithful, and if any errors should be found, either in the original or translation, these blemishes must be altogether imputed to the Editors, and not to the learned and accomplished gentlemen, who gave their friendly assistance through the most disinterested motives.

The Editors beg to return their most grateful and sincere acknowledgments, to the learned and pious Reverend Thomas Ross, L. L. D. of Lochbroom, for the great pains he has taken in transcribing the originals of these poems, and preparing them, with such classical orthography, for

the press: to the learned and pious Reverend Duncan M'Farlan, A. M. of Perth, for the elegant and faithful translation he has given to the whole of these poems, except the poem entitled *Dargo, Ossian's Address to the Sun*, and *Darthula*; to the learned and ingenious Mr. Robert Huddleston, teacher, Lunan, for his able exertions in correcting the proof-sheets, and his other friendly assistance. His incomparable and impartial edition of *Toland's History of the Druids*, with his critical *Notes* upon the same, is a better proof of his accomplishments than any thing we could state here. It is hoped that all the amateurs of antiquity will endeavour to possess themselves of this useful volume, and that Mr. Huddleston, in a short time, will be called to an appointment adequate to his abilities. To the learned and ingenious Ewen M'Lachlan, Esq. rector of the grammar school, Old Aberdeen, for his elegant and faithful translation of the poems entitled *Dargo, Ossian's Address to the Sun*, and *Darthula*. We can boldly assert, from the best authority, that Mr. M'Lachlan should be ranked amongst the first literary characters that Britain ever produced. From his profound knowledge of the oriental languages, and his vast natural ingenuity, he is justly entitled to fill the first situation in any university in the kingdom; and he has the happy art to instil into the minds of his pupils the most pious and loyal principles; yet, from his unaffected modesty, he

is far above complaining in his present situation. It is, however, to be hoped that the noble and generous nation of Great Britain, who has acquired so much glory by rewarding merit, will give him suitable encouragement, and foster his talents, that they may be the more eminently useful to succeeding ages. He has at present the whole works of Homer, in great forwardness for publication, translated from the original Greek into the Gaelic language; and it is to be hoped this monument of genius will meet that approbation from the public which it so justly deserves.

It is well known, that the whole lives of the above named gentlemen have been devoted to cultivate learning, and all their actions a series of doing good to mankind; therefore, to advance more here is unnecessary, and we are convinced that truth obliges us not to say less.



A
CHOICE COLLECTION
OF
The Poems
OF
OSSIAN, ORRANN, ULIN,
AND OTHER POETS,
WHO FLOURISHED IN THE SAME AGE,



DARGO, *THE SON OF DRUDIN:*

A
POEM.

The Argument.

The following poem celebrates the brave and wonderful exploits of Dargo, the son of Drudin, one of the chiefs of Scandinavia. It would appear, that the Fingalians had slain Dargo's father in some previous engagement. The young Chevalier, arrived at the age of manhood, and already exhibiting specimens of extraordinary valour, begins to project an extensive plan of conquest, and forms a determination, with whatever antagonist he should fight, never to quit the field till victorious. Intent on avenging his father's death, he undertakes an expedition to the Fingalian territory, where he gives battle to several of Fingal's heroes. He gains the advantage in every combat, till Gaul, the son of Morni, encounters and kills him.

This piece, in the original, bespeaks high antiquity. The style is pure and classical, though some passages may have suffered from the licentiousness of recitors, or the oscitancy of careless transcribers. An Irish copy of it is contained in pp. 301, 311, of Short's manuscript—a thick duodecimo, belonging to the Highland Society of Scotland. Another edition of it was taken down by the late Reverend Mr. Campbell, of Portree, in the Isle of Skye, and is extant among his Ossianic papers. Mr. M'Lachlan, of Aberdeen, has copies of the two editions. They agree pretty closely with the one before us; but they want the enumeration of the standards, the general engagement, and the paragraph on the state of departed heroes. The Gaelic reader, however, will find these passages in pp. 232, 234, and 243, 244, of Dr. Smith's

octavo collection, Edin. 1787, where they form parts of his "*Dargo, the Son of Druibheil*."

I RELATE the exploits of the mighty chief that came from the east with the hope of victory—a valiant hero, full of wrath, the intrepid Dargo, Drudin's son. Towards the mansion of Fingal's illustrious race, advanced Dargo, the son of Drudin, from eastern shores, the land of the brave, to destroy the Fions of Albin. The accomplished champion pledged his word, soon as he launched on the brine, that he should atchieve the defeat of each warrior in Fingal's train, however brave.

When the valorous chief arrived from the east, he eagerly sought the combat. The bright-toothed*, brown-haired Dargo, went to Ben-chruachan of the crowded hosts. Two heroes that

* The epithets "bright-toothed, brown-haired," are exact translations of the words *deud-gheal, donn*. They have a pleasing effect on the Gaelic ear, though they may not sound so gracefully in English. *Donn*, however, is evidently wrong, for the bard informs us that the hair of Dargo was of a "bright yellow." Instead of *donn*, Mr. Campbell, of Portree, reads *aluinn*, "graceful, lovely," which seems to be the true reading. The epithet *deud-gheal* being in the three copies (see the Argument), it was judged proper to translate it correctly, notwithstanding its exotic appearance in English. The Greek, as well as the Gaelic, furnishes many instances of vocables that in those languages are picturesque and poetical; but when exhibited in literal English, become divested of these qualities. For example, *λευκωλενος*, *geal-wilionnach*, white-armed; *δολιχοσκιος*, *cian-dhuatharach*, long-shadowed. This last vocable, Mr. Pope has not once inserted in his translation.

brooked no shame, were watching the white foamed ocean, the gallant Ryno, Fingal's son, and strong Caol, the offspring of Grudo. While these watched the main, they sunk into a deep repose, until the skiff of the great warrior came near them, bounding on the strand. Forth from his hollow bark sprung the beauteous hero; he hauled her over the ridges of the bright pebbled shore. His yellow hair glittered as gold over the smooth brow and ruddy cheek: his blue eyes looked as the mountain berry, in the comely face of the chief. The offspring of the king of princes grasped two spears for combat. A gold-gleaming buckler hung on the left shoulder of the monarch's illustrious son. Fearless of combat, he bore a sword of destructive force. A helmet*, polished and studded with gems, shone on the temples of the thundering warrior. The champions of the eastern land did homage to Dargo, the son of Drudin, for majestic and graceful beauty, for equal combat, and for gallant soul.

Ryno, the son of Fingal arose, with the shapely, vigorous, and valiant Caol; they grasped their weapons, and rushed to meet him. Declare thy story, mighty chief; ours it is to watch the ocean; we two boast of a king for our sire, the king of the puissant Fions of Albin.

* *Mionn*, a helmet, as it stands in the Irish copy, is the true reading. *Dhealbh* has nothing to do with the context.

He answered, unterrified: few dwell in my native land, who are strangers to my renown. I am Dargo, the son of Drudin: I avow my purpose; I am come to demand submission from the warriors of Albin. The magnanimous Ryno spoke: Who is king Dargo, the son of Drudin? Reply, or submission, how shouldst thou claim from the accomplished heroes of Innis-fail? Fierce as you are, warriors, with envy and wrath, I could wrest the sway from Gaul himself, and the race of Trenmor. Should I relate to thee, O Dargo, son of the mighty prince, the battles won by the illustrious Fingal, and by Gaul, the son of Morni, of noble deeds, and recount the many heroes of our land that would rise to meet thee in combat, wiser thou wouldst deem it not to advance, than to perish by the strokes of the valiant.

My wrath I never will resign, said Dargo, the son of Drudin, without the heads of the princes I name; the heads of Fingal, Oscar, and Gaul, the heads of Diarmad, Caolt, and Carril; and the heads of three hundred that follow each chief, to be delivered me on to-morrow's morning, as the forfeit of my father's death, or the vigorous vengeance-dealing combat; and I ask no more.

I vow, though thy words are haughty, said Caol, the beautiful and brave, that we shall fight thee, great as thou art, and here check thy pride. With the strong, undaunted, and fair formed Caol, contended Dargo, the son of Druidin, fierce in re-

sentment and rage. Ill were the hap to grapple with the mighty champion. Dargo and Caol, in the height of pride, strove with their utmost force: the son of the tall rocks replied to the noise of their cleaving shields. At length the battle ceased; and the noble Dargo, with fiercely exerted might, bound Caol on the plain.

The magnanimous Ryno arose, when the strong Caol was bound, the son of the Fenian king*. He boldly encountered Dargo. Wonderful were the valorous feats there displayed, till the forceful stroke of Dargo disabled Ryno, and the gallant warrior was bound.

Brave is thy exploit, mighty chief! thou hast made us two thy captives. Unbind the thong, accomplished champion, and bear us away with thee on thy journey. The generous Dargo released the king's sons from the thong, and took the pledge from each, that they should not again lift the sword as his foes.

Now they proceed to Selma, to the renowned king of the powerful race; Drudin's son, of victorious swords, with Ryna and Caol beneath his sway. Then arose Selma's king, the illustrious son of Comhal, with his bands of tall, straight, accomplished, well-formed warriors: many a dark brown chief, in silken mantles, enjoyed the feast and song in the hall of my king.

* Fingal, i. e. Fionn. *An Fheinn*, the Fenians, Fingalians, or followers of Fingal.

Then said the Fenian monarch, of unsullied renown:—You who have submitted to the brave, lift not your swords against him hereafter, or name yourselves no more of the house of Trenmor. Let the heroes of Innisfail sit down, and ask the sons of the king, who is the stately warrior, with the gloomy brow, that advances towards us on the field. We hailed with gentle speech the mighty man excelling in form. Dargo, unterrified, sat, and saluted the Fenian king.

Hero of distinguished beauty! declare the purpose of thy coming to Selma. The intent of my journey, O son of Comhal, and race of Trenmor! is to demand thy kingdom, or the furious combat for the privilege. To waft beyond ocean the privilege of my kingdom! vain were the purpose, without force equal to the strife. Comply with the demand; or, to-morrow's morning, give the battle of a hundred heroes.

We sent forth to the direful contest, the banner of my brother Fergus; we advanced the standard of Caoilte, the heart-rousing, storm-braving, Duniva. My own flag was displayed, radiant as the sun through misty glooms. We also reared the signal of young Diarmad O Duibhne. Now came on the host of Dargo, and the Fenian heroes! they poured to the front of battle, swifter than the scowling blast of spring, swifter than a thousand streams of the hills tumbling into a dark cavern; when, loud, strong, and maddening with

the roar of winter, they rush from the deserts. The bellowing noise of the surge, when flung against the tall rocks, by the strength of the wintry north winds, could not equal the thunder of the combat. A contest to be matched with this, I never in my days surveyed.

A hundred of the men of Fingal, heroes with weapons sharp and bright, advanced; and many a youth in the field was eager to encounter the chief. Forthwith Dargo slew the hundred; his vigour increased, while he plied sword and shield in the fell strife of blood and wounds.

Fingal, the son of Comhal, came on the next day to the field of havock, with nine thousand shining warriors, who failed not in their love of combats. Each strode along in his mail, helmet, and shield; each hero grasped a sword and a spear. Conan raised the song of war. Terrible was the scene as they advanced in their might; but terror was far from Dargo. Comhal's son, of spotless renown, hailed the chief. Dargo replied, and forthwith demanded of the Fenian king, the tribute or the combat. Though thy hand, O Dargo, be powerful (said Fingal, Albin's king), we yield not thy demand, nor fear thy combat.

Keen-sworded son of Comhal! if these warriors advance, to encounter me with the arms of contest, thou shalt give me alone the battle of three hundred heroes, that they may fall headless corpses on the plain. Fingal, without delay, sent three hun-

dred to cope with the hero. Long they plied not the exertions of vigour, till he covered the ground with the headless trunks of his foes. Three hundred more had opposed in vain; the great Dargo, furious to destroy, rushed like a mighty current with its loud surges bursting along.

Fillan arose, dreadful in his wrath. He raised his voice amid the host. He proceeded to the combat, to quell the monarch's son. Red blood smoked from their shields, and fiery sparkles streamed to the clouds, driven from the swords of the heroes, until their broken armour flew glittering from their fair sides on the plain.

O son of Morni, intrepid in danger, hero of distinguished prowess, ever strong to aid! prime champion of our hosts! remember thy valour and exploits; remember the shame of Fingal's people; our youthful sons gashed with wounds, our fair ones drenched in tears. Thine shall be, said the great king, a recompense never conferred on any hero of thy days; a hundred mails, a hundred swords, a hundred dogs in chains of gold; thy choice of the costliest gifts in the splendid mansion of Selma; thy choice of the Fenian fair ones; my own daughter, accomplished hero! shall be thine.—O Fingal! I shall lend thee my aid, said Morni's son, with intrepid voice. I and my fiercest strength, in the day of war and hardship, shall be thine.

The son of Morni, tremendous in might, and

full of wrath, advanced, armed for combat. The earth shook beneath him, as he trode to meet Dargo, the son of Drudin. Then awoke the rage of the two mighty warriors: many were the strokes dealt on helm and head, by Ulan* and by Drudin's son. Fiercely they urged the strife; the echo of the rocks replied; birds flew towards the firmament, scared by the thunder of their shields. The Fenian hosts were mute, listening to the strokes of the fearful conflict. Seven nights and seven days our heroes and fair ones were sad; until the noble Dargo, son of Drudin, fell by the mighty Gaul. A day and year Gaul continued, before his deep wounds were healed; while the feast and the music, in our hall, cheered the heart of the son of Morni.

Myself, Fergus, and Fillan, were in the mansion of our illustrious father. I sung the praises of heroes, and they acquired the hardy exercises of war. Ghosts fled from their strokes, and powerful chiefs were made to yield. Though now feeble and grey with age, I was then a hero of renown.

I rejoice in the journey of the chiefs to the hill of placid ghosts, where wrath is for ever hushed, and the heroes are of one mind. Their hosts meet in peace, gliding smoothly on the wings of the storm. No sounding of shields—no clashing of swords—is heard in the dwelling of the child-

* Gaul.

ren of love. The race of Lochlin and of Fingal are on high, listening to the music of the same bards. They delight no more in the strife; they miss not the forest or the chace. Like me, they look with pensive smile on the years that are gone; they bend their eyes with wonder on the fields of the red deer, from their grey clothing of mist, as they ride on the dancing shower. Like the tale of departed years speeding their dark brown flight across the hill, so is the dream of life to you, O chiefs! and so to me is the Dargo of combats.

CROM-GLEN.

The Argument.

Fingal and his heroes had killed a great number of Scandinavians, and particularly the most of the king's sons, in a battle at a place called Cliavan, where Fingal obtained a complete victory over the people of Lochlin. After these returned to their own country, they were filled with rage and pride, in consequence of the disgrace and shame they suffered from their wives, and especially their countrymen, because the brave Caledonians had conquered them. On this account they sent a treacherous message to Fingal, offering him the king of Lochlin's daughter in marriage: but Fingal and his people being well acquainted with their treachery, took with them knives, or dirks, concealed; and when the men of Lochlin began to put their treachery in execution, Fingal sung a stanza of a poem concerning the knives, which his heroes understood; and though the men of Lochlin caused their own people to sit down with one of Fingal's men between two of them (through pretended friendship), the brave Caledonians killed every man in Beirba*, the capital of the kingdom of Denmark, and carried off the king's daughter, as this poem relates.

I SHALL tell you the true tale (and true it is indeed), of the pleasing attachment of the heroes, if you solicit the recital.

* The capital, or Copenhagen.

Upon a day we gathered upon Crom-glen*, of the rocks, a terrible hero came in privily amongst us. Fingal, of the mildest voice spoke to him; you are welcome to a night's hospitality; twelve houses we were in this place, when we went to the chace in Crom-glen; twelve fires were in every house, and a hundred and one around every fire, and the feeblest of those would alone engage a hundred. When bald Conan discerned the image of the hero coming by his side, he drew his closed fist against the fierce hero of one eye. Fingal spoke aloud, cease Conan, stop thy fist, great would our dishonour be, shouldst thou strike the messenger of Lochlin's king. But messenger of the fiercest eye and wildest look, tell us thy surname and thy character, thou whose furious steps are evil, tell us thy tale, dismal hero. From broad Lochlin do I come, from the men of heroic shining deeds; my steps were not slow, though far, from the coasts that confine Lochlin. The daughter of the king of Lochlin has fixed her heart on you, Fingal; it is a tale without guile: she resolutely vowed she would not go into a house, until you should go in quest of her: I come to invite thee, son of Comhal, and thy people, to the feast. Let us draw on our gauzy garments, around our thin athletic bodies, our handsomest coats of mail, our helmets of beautiful hue, our shields edged with gold, our swords

* Crooked valley, in Mull.

and mail—on every high kneed hero: let the stern desire to go appear in every face; the instruments of war surrounding every brave hero. “Had I been a forger of arms,” Fingal said, “well would I form knives; I would temper their blades with steel, and their points with the hardest steel; their shafts of heather, with their yellow heads, I would fix in the thick backs of the thin edges *.” We launched out on the sound of the ocean; heroes who could not be easily matched; manly and coolly we landed on the coast, with the message of the fierce hero of the king of Lochlin; and in Beirba we feasted, in the fort of the learned, with cheerful amusement, consuming the banquet. Then the king of Lochlin spoke aloud. Hast thou brought home my son with thee, Fingal? the blue-eyed Gorman of battles. Said Raino, of the white hands, I am the man who killed thy son Gorman, deny the man, I shall not, since it is by me he fell in battle. Hast thou brought with thee Ronan my son, the hero of the beautiful form: or the Victorious, my other son, or the brave Mighty-hand, the supporter of battles? I am the person who killed Ronan thy son, says Dermid O Duvno, on the shore of Cliavan, of the north, where many of thy great people fell. Then spoke Oscar, who never lied, I am the one who killed the Mighty-hand, in defiance of any who ever grew in the

* This true poetical description of dirks, is thought to be the first invention of that weapon.

kingdom of Lochlin. Caoilte, of the stout heart, answered, I am the one who cut off the head of the Victorious: my feet were swift in the field, slaughtering and killing thy people.

A man thus lifted up his voice on the other side. Woe to the one who would rouse the feud at this time: the Fingalians shall leave you dead in your halls, and shall depart for Morven to-morrow. Fingal, said Lochlin's king, thou art now taken captive, and all thy people of high-sounding threats; in defiance of the strength of all thy host, speak of Albin never more. The Fingalians, with the boldest voice, answered, we cannot be kept captive, for it is by us the first man is killed. Then Oscar drew the horn which was in his hand, from which he drank, and killed a hundred-and-fifty mighty men, before the Fingalians began the battle. Up rose Gaul of the hardy, happy strokes, and strongly excited to combat. "O you mighty race of Morven, prove at this time, your hardy and native bravery." Our ten hundred dirks we drew, to animate our fortitude and heroic deeds, and each of us killed two of the king's family in Beirba; high-minded in our pride and fame, out we departed and killed the centinel, and all who were near the hall of the king; Fingal was in private a short time with the daughter of Manus, of the two-fold guile, and over the sea carried her along to high Morven, of the aged oak, and the feast of shells was in Selma; all the hall was joy-

ful, and cheerful, the flesh of the deer was plentiful, with the sons of Morni and the sons of Baoisge. Though I now walk slow and feeble, great was my fame in the hall of those heroes. Over Manus of the havens of ships, and of booty, my noble father had power and authority. Sad and mournful is my case, lamenting now the brave heroes, and relating the feasts in Crom-glen.

EVIR-ALUIN,

A

POEM.

The Argument.

Ossian being an old hero, blind and feeble; all the Fingalians, and the companions of his youth departed; he was without substance, or friends, lamenting the death of the heroes who died, and ruminating on his own exploits, and on the honour in which he was held as the son of a king, and as a superior hero in the days of his youth. At that time a maid, who was in the same house, shewed him some mark of contempt, upon which he spoke the following words; relating particularly the time of his courtship of Evir-aluin, the daughter of Brian, his first wife, how he proved himself a hero, and all the heroes who attended him, when he cut off the head of Cormag, Evir-aluin's lover. He relates how he, himself, together with his company, went with rejoicing to his father, Evir-aluin being along with him, with Cormag's head in his hand. But the great change he underwent since that time, in being despised by a maid, is a proverb in the Highlands to this day—when a person is old and sick, without riches and friends, he is like Ossian after the Fingalians.

DESPISED is man where he is not beloved.
Daughter of Angus, let me inform you, that I had
once been a valiant hero in mighty feasts, although

I am this day an aged feeble hero. On the day in which Evir-aluin, of the beautiful locks, went along with us, the maid of the snow-white hand, the beloved of Cormag, the stranger; we departed for the hero of the lake of Lego. We were in number twelve, the most valiant under the sun. Whoever could consider our undaunted resolute thoughts, every evil dog would, with the fleetest feet, fly before us. Then did Brian, the son of Luthar, welcome the tall, white-handed, exquisitely handsome heroes: modest, strong, and valiant, who never could bear reproach or contempt. With the mildest voice, he enquired of us the purpose of our expedition. Answered then Caoilte, at our head, first of men: from thee to seek thy daughter. For whom do you come to seek her, saith Brian. To Ossian, the son of Fingal (the heroes said). Happy is she who gets thee, powerful hero of the havens of ships. Saith Brian, and falsehood he uttered not, although mine were twelve daughters, thine, Ossian, would be the first and choicest daughter, on account of thy fame among Fingal's heroes. The door of the large palace, thatched with the plumage of birds, was by Brian widely opened, and sportive and glad were we all, beholding Evir, of the yellow curled hair. When the generous Evir beheld Ossian, the son of Fingal, the valiant hero, the maid of the most beautiful form fixed the entire love of her heart on the son of bravest deeds. To Drumdehir we

all departed, and Cormag was before us in his haven of ships, with his people strong and bold, waiting the arrival of Fingal's numerous host. Like a furious deluge of flame, the people opposed us on the mountain. Eight of Cormag's men were gathered; great were their deeds of wrath, and mighty their valour; the son of Colla, and Doirre of the wounds; the son of the brave Toscar, and Taog; the victorious Frestal, the son of the king, and Daire of the happy feats; Daol, brave on the field, and the banner of the mighty Cormag in his hand. Eight heroes had Ossian of brave deeds, for his defence in the proud battle: Mulla, the son of Sken, and Fiall; the trusty Gulach; the heroes of Fingal; Fillan, and Carril the proud; Dubh, the son of Baoisge, of the stoutest mind; Toscar, first amidst the chiefs of steel, under the standard at the head of the Firbolg.

Toscar and Daol met together by one another's side, in presence of the host. The conflict of the two strong heroes was as the strong blasts of the ocean when its foam is fierce. It was the strife of two lions, and dirks they wanted not to draw blood. Though powerful and strong was the defence of their shields, the mist of blood was round their eye-brows; the sons of the rock answered to the sound of their shields; birds fled aloft to the sky; the noise of their shields was like the thunder of Eit-glen, and round them shook the hills. Into pieces their hardy spears were broke; the blasts

of their breath were like the wind in Ard-ven: our old heroes and every maid lamented the dismal strife. But Toscar called to his mind the dirk, a weapon dear to the hero. Nine wounds he made in the side of Daol, a short time before the battle ceased. Like the sound of a hammer in strong hands, was the rage of conflict among the host; with eager desire, pushing forward toward Ossian at every stroke, in the victorious battle, of his mighty hand. Fifty shields did Ossian break upon the heath, pushing in his might toward the hardy Cormag; and fifty blue blades of steel did Cormag, the son of Airth, break upon my back. I beheaded the valiant Cormag on the field of battle. I moved to the hall of Fingal, with the head by the hair in my hand. I led Evir to the palace of the king, where joyful was the music, the song, and the feast. As my father was always wont to do, she was caressed with kindness and hospitality.

Ulin and the bards began, in harmonious strains, to sing of my valiant deeds in the strife: how that the noise of my arms was like the stream of Lara, in time of the flood, or as the lightning in the clouds; or as the spirit of Loda flying in the fierce storm; or as the speat of the mountains bounding in white foam over the rocks, tearing trees from their roots. They said the strength of my hand was like an aged oak on Morven; and that the hardness of my steel and mail was like the rock.

of Lego's lake; and the wave beating violently against it. That the hill did shake beneath my feet; that I roused the desire of battle in old feeble heroes; that to the Fingalians and Evir, the highest honour resulted from the hardy deeds of Ossian against Cormag. My father, with joy, heard the tale of my fame from the bards. Evir rejoiced at the praise of her hero: and all in Selma's hall honoured Ossian and his first love. Except Conan, the son of Morni, willing to excite the feud again; was bound by Julin his brother. Captive and uneasy, was cast into a sequestered corner. But my noble and generous father ordered the bands of Conan to be untied. Three times he received the shell, and drank to the happiness of Evir. Whoever then would have told me that night, in the fort of the brave, the contempt I met with this night, would have received evil at my hand.

THE FINGALIANS'

GREAT DISTRESS.

A
POEM.

The Argument.

At a place called *Druim-dealg* (or *Druim-dealacha*, in the upper part of Argyleshire), a name suitable to the place, because there are two sources of water, one of them running directly to the west, into that firth of the Atlantic, in which is the stream of Lara, now commonly called *Conn-thuil*; the other water running eastward into the sea at Dundee: at this place Fingal gave a feast to the chiefs of the Fingalians, and many of his noble leaders; but two of his heroes, Raino and Ailde, he neglected to invite. These two learning that the chief nobles of Fingal got a feast, took it as an affront, and vowed to leave Fingal's family, and to carry on war, together with the king of Lochlin, against him, until they should revenge on Fingal, and his leaders, the affront thus offered them. These two handsome magnanimous heroes, laid on board a ship their coats of mail and arms, sailed to Lochlin, went forward to the city of Beirva, and developed their design. With great joy the king of Lochlin welcomed them, and prepared a feast for them, and they bound themselves to his service for a year. Ailde was a handsome eloquent hero; like a bold lion in time of strife, and like a chaste, mild, calm virgin, in time of peace. The queen of Lochlin fell deeply in love with him; she preferred the valiant Fingalian to Erragon, with all his riches, his hall, and his kingdom. From the king's bed she departed with Ailde and Raino, and they returned to Albin, where they were in a friendly manner received by Fingal. Erragon collected all

the chiefs and armies of his kingdom, and came to wage war with Fingal and his host. According to Fingal's polite custom, he offered advantageous terms to the king of Lochlin, on condition he would return home in peace. Erragon rejected all proposals, unless Fingal, and all his chiefs, would submit to his own judgment and decision; unless the spoils were brought to the shore, and Ailde and Raino beheaded, and many more besides of Fingal's nobles put to death. Fingal and his chiefs preferred offering a furious battle to the men of Lochlin, to the cowardly alternative of delivering up the heads of his heroes as a boon. Fingal and his heroes went forth with their banners, and although their numbers were few in comparison to the numerous host which came from Lochlin, the heroic Fingalians obtained the victory. But more than the one half of the Fingalians fell on that day, and none of their enemies returned home to relate who obtained the victory in the field.

ON a day when Patrick was in his tower attending, not to the sacred song, but to the shell, he went to the hall of Ossian, the son of Fingal, since pleasant was his voice to him. Thrice welcome, aged mildest hero! to visit thee we have come, valiant chief of the most dauntless form, who never refused the solicited boon.

From thee we would know, grand-son of Comhal, of hardy swords, the tale of the hard-fought battle of the Fingalians, since the day of your birth. A proof of what you ask, I have to give you. Patrick*, of the sweetest psalms; a tale of the hardest battle fought by the Fingalians since they were born. In Albin, in the days of the

*This Patrick was one of the Druids, and not St. Patrick who established christianity first in Ireland.

heroes, Fingal neglected to call some of the Fingalians to the feast he gave at *Druim-dealg*. The proud rage of the heroes was roused. At the feast, since you neglected us, saith Ronan of sweet voice, I and the generous Ailde will vow not to approach Fingal's hall for a year. Quickly they took their departure, with their shields and swords, to their ship; and the stately youths moved toward the king of Lochlin, of the smooth hills. The two youths, of the fairest hue, have bound themselves for a year with the king. The king of Cranchur, of sharp steel; and Ailde, who never refused a man. The spouse of the king of Lochlin, of brown shields, fell deeply in unlawful love with cheerful Ailde, of sharp arms; until, in the deceitful attempt, she at last succeeded. She rose from the king's bed: a deed, concerning which much blood was shed. They to royal Albin, of the Fingalians, with speed traversed the sea. Er-ragon, the son of Ainner, of ships, at that time was king of Lochlin, who proved victorious in every battle. Hardy was his steel, and valiant his arm. His forces, the king of Lochlin, on a sudden collected; and his fleet, swift and strong. With him rose nine kings, with their mighty hosts. Lochlin's fierce race. Pure, and ready were their arms for the conflict. They swore, before their departure, never to return as long as there was a Fingalian left behind. They sailed on high waves to the coasts of Albin, of naked arms; and pitch-

ed thick and numerous their tents near the house where Fingal resided. A message came to Fingal—a heavy tale of woe to us: it was the conflict of the heroes in Innis-Phail, courting the battle on the northern shore. Fingal, and all the Fingalian chiefs together, formed a council, to send the king's daughter, if he would accept of her, to the king of Lochlin, of sharp arms. The king's daughter, of the fairest skin and bluest eye, we sent, attended by a hundred steeds, the most stately that ever trode the heath, with a hundred riders on their backs, with their golden robes glittering like the sun's rays. On the shore, no sooner had she alighted, than behind her she left the horses, and, with two golden apples in her right hand, stepped forward to meet them: her vestments being covered with the richest gold, the picture of that crown to which armies submit. Beautiful maid, of the curled locks, tell us thy news from Fingal's host. If thy wife, she said, had proved false and unjust to thee—had committed an atrocious deed—in her place you shall have me as exchange; you shall receive a hundred steeds, the most beautiful that ever stood on a hill; a hundred riders on their backs, with golden robes sparkling like the sun beams; a hundred horns that can make wine of pure water; whoever shall drink out of them shall find his health never impaired. These you shall get; and a hundred belts—the waist which they surround shall not die; every af-

fiction and heaviness they would heal—the precious jewels of free puissant virtues; a hundred dishes, a course fit for a king, to feed and nurse his young family; whoever would keep them for life would always preserve his youth. All these you will obtain; and a hundred sons of royal race, who would vanquish the fiercest armies; a hundred hawks, most expert at catching birds; a hundred ships, that would cleave the surges on the roughest stream, and heavily loaded with the richest ware; a hundred herds of horses; a valley full of spotted cows. But, if all this boon shall not satisfy thee, take thy wife and depart. I would not make peace with young Ailde, or with all the Fingalian chiefs, until Fingal himself submits to my judgment, and the booty is brought down to the shore. Thou hadst not brought over the sea, in my judgment, forces to make Fingal submit to thy will, nor to force the booty to the shore. If thou wilt not accept the offered boon, farewell. Since you ask what is beyond what is right and just, you shall not obtain the heads of the heroes; and the army of Innis-Phail to you shall never surrender. Thou shalt not depart from me, thou maid of the braided locks, mild virgin, of the sweetest voice; freely shalt thou get the choicest jewels, and remain with me as my wife.

But, said the virgin, I shall not remain, head of chiefs, since I cannot appease thy fear and wrath; and since, to my decision, you will not submit

and proclaim peace with all the Fingalians. She suddenly turned her back, and rode off with the fleetest stride. Many were the banners lifted on high, and quickly the Fingalians assumed their arms. Seven score of the host, and Ailde himself at their head, by the hand of great Erragon fell, before the armies joined battle. Fingal, with silence, long beheld the fray; and on all the Fingalians lay a heavy gloom. Who among you, saith he, can match Erragon in fight, before we permit him to overwhelm us? Gaul, the unconquerable hero, had the answer ready to this great question: let me and Erragon engage in conflict, and try our heroic swiftness.

To protect thee from the strokes of the hero, upon each side of thy shield place two men of valour—the son of Luich and the bowed Ciaran, the brown-haired Dearmid, and the son of Lemo. Bring with thee the seven score valiant champions, who never yield; sufficient are the powerful feats of their arms to diminish continually the numbers of the enemy's host. On the ninth day, Gaul obtained the victory, and the head of the king of Lochlin, of brown shields. Four score and five thousand mighty men fell by the hands of Garra and Gaul; and three times that number by Oscar, my son, and by Carrul, of the white skin. Upon the name by which I am called, Patrick of the sweet psalms, by myself and by Fingal there fell as many as by the four. Except him who lost

his power, or with dread fled to Greece, of the king of Lochlin's family, or of his army none returned home to his own country. But though there our battle we fought, we have not prospered on that day: more than the half of our Fingalian heroes we left on the shore to the south-west; and, were I to give an oath by my king, not more than the third of us escaped. This was the most hard battle in which the Fingalians ever were. Patrick, of the psalms and bells, hadst thou stood spectator on the shore, high would thy esteem for the Fingalians be.

THE BANNERS
OF
THE FINGALIANS.
A
POEM.

The Argument.

Of the connection between this and the preceding poem, it is unnecessary to say much here. But it is evident that the chiefs of the Fingalians went forth with their banners, with their hardy, fierce, heavy, mighty companies, each exciting his companion to wound and destroy their enemies. The men of Lochlin they all killed, as this poem relates; and, although many of the Fingalians were killed, they kept the field with honour.

THOUGH the king of Lochlin should get all the riches and jewels in Albin, he would not return with his people, until all the Fingalians were reduced under his authority. Fergus unfurled his banner from the standard on high, as a signal that Lochlin's king refused the offered boon. Stately

and slowly advanced the lovely Fingalians, to wound and destroy Lochlin. Numerous were the multitude which landed from the waves, and mighty were the men of strength. Upon the king of Lochlin's looking at a distance, he spied a banner coming forth, and a magnanimous hero at its head, and it shining with Albin's gold. Bard of the melodious song, he asked, what banner is that? Is that the banner of a valiant son of victory? I see a hero, tall and stout, at its head, and the banner rising high above the host. It is, answered the bard, the grey ensign of swords, the banner of Dermid, the son of Duvno. When all the Fingalians are wont to come forth, the grey ensign of swords was always foremost. But, bard of melodious song, what is this other banner; is it that of a valiant son of victory? I discern a valiant hero at its head, and itself waving above the multitude. It is the one footed red banner, that of Raino, of the numerous host; a banner under which heads are cleft in twain and ancles are bathed in torrents of blood. What banner is this, bard of melodious song? Is this the banner of a victorious son of war? I see a valiant hero at its head, and the banner itself waving over the mighty host. Its name is the spotted *Brechuil brochuil*, replied the bard, the banner of the great Gaul, the son of Morni, that never turned its back to the enemy, till the heavy green earth had shook. It is clothed with yellow silk, it is the first to advance,

and the last to recede. What is this banner, bard of the melodious song? Is this the banner of a victorious son of war? I see a valiant hero at its head, and itself waving over the people. This is the black sharp banner of Caoilte, the son of Retha; let the host in battle be ever so numerous, the black sharp banner of destruction was the most famous. But what other banner is this, bard of melodious song? Is this the banner of a valiant son of war? I see a brave hero at the head of it, and itself hovering over the host. This is the *Squab-gavi* (sweeping wonder), the banner of the courageous valiant Oscar; in the conflict of chiefs the *Squab-gavi* was first in fame. We reared aloft the sun-beam, the standard of Fingal, valiant in strife: fair it glittered with spangles of gold, and high was its renown in fields of fame. Sad to you is the sun-beam, of the race of Comhal, fixed to its standard, with nine glittering chains of yellow gold of the greatest value, and nine-times-nine complete heroes under the head of every chain. Fingal exclaimed—Bow your heads in battle, and let every brave hero perform what he promised, and prove to Lochlin now that there are hardy heroes of valiant deeds in Morven. Many a scalp was uncovered, and many a shoulder gashed with wounds, from the rising of the sun until evening. One thousand of choice heroes only escaped to the ships from the edge of the sword; they fled like the violent torrent rolling from the height of the

mountain, and winging their flight in the fray. Many were the heroes, and bold; courageous, heavy champions. But, on either side, there was none equal to my son Óscar. Seven troops, of numerous hosts, fell by victorious Oscar; the nine sons of red-haired Manus; seven score and a thousand champions. As many fell by Caoilte and Gaul; but the son of Comal and his valiant heroes were like torrents of fire, wasting in their rage, and rapidly ascending in columns of sparkles: such were the heavy strokes of every hero in the conflict struck by the Fingalians, who exulted with joy at hearing the shrieks of the vanquished foe, flying like the serpent that runs from the fire. Thus was the victory the king obtained, and in this most dangerous deed was Ossian; though I am this day aged and grey, many were the heroes who fell by my hand in the field.

But though that we completely overcame the foe, our loss on that day we never recovered. More than half the Fingalians were lost in the cause of Raino and Ailde,

CUCHULIN

IN HIS
CHARIOT.

A
POEM.

The Argument.

As Cuchulin was a powerful and valiant hero; so much so, as that there is none of the Fingalian heroes mentioned in history of greater valour, except Gaul and Oscar—it is said, as a common proverb, that when any person is remarkably strong, and who fears nothing, he is like Cuchulin. Fingal came to assist Cuchulin in a battle fought between him and Garv, the son of Stairn. Garv sent out a messenger to observe the appearance of Cuchulin coming in his chariot. When the messenger returned, Garv and he spoke to one another in the following manner.

WHAT is the cause of thy expedition, or what is thy report? My tale and the cause of my journey is, that I see the sons of Erin coming forth towards you from the plain, in a chariot on which are engraved brown white wreathes: its make is fleet, active, and firm. Swift and strong, and full

of wily arts, is the noble race. The chair is branchy, solid, narrow; bold, stout, and hardy, are the pillars: four broad-breasted steeds are in that handsome chariot.

What is to be seen in that chariot? In that chariot are seen the white-bellied, white-haired, small-eared, thin-sided, thin-hoofed, prancing, gallant, coursing horses; with their small, splendid, brisk bridles; running, like the fawn of the roe, after it is slightly wounded; or like the hard boisterous wind of winter coming forward to you in that chariot.—But what is seen in that chariot? The grey, swift, high-blooded, strong, valiant, magnanimous, nimble, weighty horses, that would tear the turf from the cliffs of the rocks on the shore of the ocean. The horses obstinate, lively, imperious, strong mettled, quick, wilfully vigilant; headed like the claw of an eagle against the face of the wild beast, called the Liathmor; great, beautiful, and delicate.

What do we see in that chariot? In that chariot we see the bald-pated, white-hoofed, small-shanked, clean-maned, crooked-necked, high-headed, silk-mantled, broad-breasted, young, short-haired, small-eared, high-spirited, stately-formed, wide-nostriled, slender-made horses; covered with jewels; brisk as foals, comely, nice, ostentatious, wild-leaping in the chariot—commonly called Du-semelin.

What is it that is sitting in that chariot? In

that chariot is sitting the beautiful formed hero; puissant, eloquent and elegant in speech; bright, and exquisitely handsome. Seven ways his eyes do see: his sight becomes him well. Six thick sinewy fingers are upon every hand that hangs from his shoulder. There are seven white hairs in his head, brown hair in the ringlets of his locks, and sleek, red hair above it; and white-yellow hair, of golden hue, with a ring on the top of the hair to preserve it. His name is Cuchulin, the son of Semo the prosperous, son of Aoidh, the son of Aigh, son of other Aoidh. His face is as the sparks of the fire, red; fleet on the mountain-side, as the swift mist on the hills, or as the fleetness of the roe on the lonely desert, or as a hare on the tedious plain; frequent were the steps of the steeds, nimble and delicate approaching us; like the snow that makes gloomy and sad the sloping sides of the cliffs, was the neighing and tossing of the horses towards thee.

THE HEADS.

A
POEM.

The Argument.

Cuchulin was the most heroic champion amongst the heroes of Fingal, except Gaul and Oscar. He was step-son to Conull. It appears that great numbers overcame Cuchulin, and killed him, brave as he was. Conull, his step-father, heard that he was killed. When Cuchulin was wounded, he ordered one of his men to go to Conull, and inform him that his step-son had built a new house. Conull inquired of him what was the height, length, and breadth of the house. The man said, when he lay down, his nose would touch the roof, the back of his head the floor; and when he would stretch himself, his feet would be at the lower, and his head at the upper end of the house: for Conull bound himself by a vow, that he would kill any one who would first bring him the news of Cuchulin's death. Conull having heard this, said that his step-son was dead, and the messenger called himself to witness, that he was not the person who informed him of his death. Conull, and another friend of Cuchulin, vowed that they would not cease, until they would fill the longest withy in the country with heads of the sons of chiefs, to ransom Cuchulin's death. Conull began to behead them, and Cuchulin's friend to sling them on the withy. Three times he let the eye of the withy run; and among the rest, Conull killed his brothers-in-law.

CONULL, take possession of the heads. Sure
we are that thou hadst unsheathed thy sword. Of

these heads thou hast on the withy canst thou trace their generations and their names, when now dead? Daughter of the generous Fairbear-tach, of many steeds; young virgin, of sweet sentiments, a ransom for Cuchulin, of the valiant deeds, from the south I brought the heads. But what is that rough, brown-haired, head, thou hast laid aside upon thy left side, great Conull? His smooth cheek is more red than the rose, and its colour is not changed. It is the bloody Maigre, of horses, who plundered every sea: off himself, I have cut the head, and by me his armies fell. But what do I see beyond him; his feeble hair, thick and sleek; his eye-brows like the grass, and his teeth white as the blossom; and more beautiful than the rest, is the form of his head? It is the son of Luthach, from the red Demi-island, the son of generosity, who fell by my prowess: my opinion is, that that is his head, the noble king of Loiginn (Lagenia of Ptolemy), of spotted swords. Great Conull, of royal prowess, what other head is that at the end of the rest, with his golden yellow hair upon his splendid head, bossy and thick silvery hue? It is the son of King Fergus, of many steeds, a mariner who would spoil every haven, my sister's son, from the pleasant mild tower; I severed his head from his body: low is the honour for the son of a king to be carried in peace by the hair. Conull, of the valiant feats, what are the two heads to thy right hand: of one

colour is the hair of the heroes? Woe to the woman who obtained their favour? They are Cuthil and hardy Conull, who would conquer with rage; I carried back their heads, and their bodies are under the same plain. What are the two heads on thy left hand? Beautiful is their complexion and their form? They are the heads of Manus, and the great Buine, I judge; in their possession was found the head of the Dog on the plains of Temora, of smooth streams. What are the six heads of the most exquisitely beautiful form, I behold on the north side? Blue is their face, and squaint their eyes; dark is their hair, O hardy Conull. Six brothers they are; there they lie dead, and their mouth to the wind, the children of Caledin, of famous deeds, a race who were inimicable to my love. Twenty and one, and twenty hundred heads, without numbering the many wounds of noble sons of chiefs, fell as a ransom for the head of the Dog.

THE BLACK DOG.

A
POEM.

There is a Dun, or Fort, on the estate of James Campbell, Esq. of Dunmore, in Argyleshire, called, to this day, the Dun of the Black Dog. It would appear, the Fingalians had built this fort, where the black dog was killed, as the history relates. There is a plain at the door of the fort, called the Plain of the Queen to this day. The place where the fort stood was advantageous, both by sea and land, to valiant heroes, who were to defend their country from their enemies. It is also suitable to men who delighted in hunting, and every royal amusement that gave them pleasure. And as to the manners of the building, it is a proof that the heroes of Fingal, with respect to strength, were similar to their fame in *Ossian's Poems*; for there are stones in the fort that would astonish any person to be told that they were raised by human beings; and it is certain, that at that time, there was little knowledge of mechanical arts, but strength alone.

On a day we were at the mountain chace, and without dogs we seldom went; hearing the sweet music of birds, the roaring of deer and of elk. With our sharp arms and dogs, we slaughtered

without guile. And in the evening, with joy, music, and cheerfulness, came home to our hall.

Early in the morning, rose the chief of the Fin-galians, before the sun had gilded the plain; he observed on the mountain-side a man clothed in red, with a black dog. The mild hero approach-ed us; but at length to our vexation. His face was incapable of the emotion of terror, and he strongly solicited a battle of dogs. Fairer than the rays of the sun was his complexion; his two cheeks of the colour of the rasp; his body whiter than any snow, though his hair happened to be black. In the first of the conflict, we let forward towards him the best pack of dogs in our house. By the black dog, ferocious in strife, fifty of our dogs were killed.

Then spoke Fingal, of sweetest voice: this af-fray is not little indeed. His back he turned to the host, and Bran, with a stern countenance, he struck. The victorious Bran stared at his mas-ter, with a sorrowful look; and was full of asto-nishment that he struck him. Great pity it is, said Fingal, that the hand with which I struck Bran, had not been severed from the shoulder. Then did Bran shake his golden chain; and hard and loud among the people was his squall. His two eyes were kindled into a flame in his head: and his bristles stood erect for battle. Without delay, said Fingal, loose the thongs of my dog; mighty was his prowess till this day; that we

may behold a fair engagement between Bran and the black dog. Beautiful was the form of Bran; the hair of his tendons was far from his head: his middle broad, his breast low, joints bowed, and crooked houghs; the feet of Bran were of a yellow hue, his two sides black, and his belly white; his back green, about which the beasts of the chace often lay; his steep folding ears of the colour of purple. They set the dogs nose to nose, and blood was shed among the host; the fierce strong conflict ensued, before the black dog was killed by Bran. Said Evan-Ossian, from the mountain of dogs, I thought that there was not among the Fingalians one dog able to wound Forr, let his prowess be ever so great. And were it not for the cunning methods, and artful turns used by Bran, and his greatness of strength, never was a dog bound by a thong, which could have left Forr dead west at the Dun. Many are the ivory-teethed virgins, of the sweetest voice, and bluest eyes, who dwell in the land of Torc, and who this night would feed my dog. The true generous hero, in a narrow bed of clay, had buried his dog; and in the Dun, to the west, were buried by the Fingalians one hundred and fifty dogs.

For amusement, and the joy of the shell, we went with the son of Comhal, of the golden horns, to the Dun. Joyful and plentiful was our house; though this night the voice of none of them is heard in the tower. That night, in the hall of Fingal, happy

and cheerful was our situation, playing on musical instruments; and feasting on birds, deer, and elk.

FINGAL'S PANEGYRIC
ON
GAUL, COLGUIL, AND TRATHAL.
A
POEM.

HIGH-SPIRITED was the disposition of Gaul, the warlike chief of Fingal. He was a hero tall and lean, strong-constituted and dauntless; a fair, generous hero, of the sweetest voice; gentle his temper; a hero joyful and great. His mind was brave, and his beautiful form without defect, and of the sincerest smile: a foster of shields. There is not a king superior to Gaul in the world, save Fingal alone: his strength like the waves of the ocean, expert in heroism, a lion in battle, valiant in deeds, strong his arm: he was the best of kings. His breast was durable in conflict; trusty to the brave. Magnanimous were the warlike armies of the Fingalians. Steady was the friendship of Gaul; victorious was he ever in battle; high-bouncing was his rage; his store was abundant. A hero of mild white teeth, who never forsook his friend; favourable was his smile, and re-

sistless his strength; his hand faints not among fifty kings; he was stately, smooth, warlike, and great.

Trathal went forth in his armour, like the stones from the top of a mountain; bouncing down its sides, like a strong, fierce, roaring stream; or like the conflagration of the trees of the forest. Like the black torrent of the mountains, were himself and Colguil. On every side their loud-sounding voices were heard: louder was the noise of their white-edged steel than the echo of the rocks, or the lightning and thunder of the sky. Trathal was as the strength of the wind, that drives down the pine of cheerful Morven: and Colguil was as the swiftness of bounding torrents, bouncing up against the face of the hill. With pride their faces swelled for combat, like two lions separated from their young cubs; or like a bear and wild boar: such was the dreadful track and form of the two champions.

FINGAL'S
ADDRESS TO OSCAR.

4
POEM.

SON of my son, said the king, first of the valiant youths, I saw the glittering of thy sword in battle; and it was my pride to behold thy victory in the conflict. Closely pursue the glory of thy ancestors, and never fail to be what they have been, when Treunmor of battles lived, and Trathal the father of dauntless heroes.

With victory every battle was fought by them; and the renown of every combat was won; and their fame shall continue in the song in the memory of the bards henceforth. O! Oscar vanquish the hero strongly armed, and protect the needy and feeble-handed. Belike a strong torrent of winter-tide in contending with the foes of the Fingalians; but like the feeble, soft, mild gale of summer to those who ask thine aid: such was Treunmor of victories; such was Trathal the defeater of armies, after him. And Fingal was the protector of the feeble, to defend him from the injury of the

oppressive: to his relief I would stretch my arm;
with joy I would go forth to salute him; and
friendship and protection he would find behind
the shade of the sparkling lightning of my steel.

THE DEATH OF OSCAR.

A
POEM.

The Argument.

Oscar being a valiant illustrious hero in obtaining victory; as a mountain flood in time of battle, brave and invincible; but as a mild meek virgin in time of peace. Cairbre, the king of Uladh, or Ulster*, sent for him with a deceitful intention, and, as it were, as a friend. But when the king of Uladh thought that Oscar was merry with drink, he asked his spear from Oscar, as an occasion of affronting him. Oscar understood his intention, and told him that his demand was very unjust; but that he would get the aid of his hand and spear in any time of battle or combat, if he would be friendly to the Fingalians. When Oscar refused the spear, Cairbre told him that the denial of the spear would be the cause of his death. Oscar answered him that his death would not be unrevenged; that he would kill a great number of his people, and himself also: upon which the conflict began. And although Oscar had only three hundred men, who went with him to serve him, this poem relates the great number he killed of the king's people, and that he killed the king himself and his son. There was a maid among the Fingalians, who was accustomed to prophecy, and she told, on the day of battle, that Oscar would kill the king, and great numbers of his people.

* Lochlin, Denmark, or Scandinavia, in general, mentioned in our ancient poems, is mistaken. Laighinn, in Ireland, or the Lagenia of Ptolemy, is in the province of Ulster. This Cairbre was not king of Lochlin, but king of Laighinn.

MY son, I shall not call my sovereign, though Ossian should be offended at it this night. Oscar, and the strong Cairbre, fell in the battle of Gabra: the sharp pointed spear in the hand of Cairbre, he would shake in the ire of battle: he who tells the truth, says that by it Oscar was slain. Maid, who washes thy garment? To us prophecy without falsehood; shall any man of them fall by us: or shall we be victorious over Uladh? There shall fall, said she, by Oscar, many hundreds, and the king, himself, by him shall be wounded; and many of the warriors he brought with him over the sea.

Have you heard of Fingal's expedition, when he departed towards Erin? Cairbre came with his host, and took possession of Erin, as sole monarch. We, as many as there were of the Fingalians, moved forward, strong and valiant: armies and troops of his, we have slain on the north side of Erin. By red Cairbre, a message was sent to the hardy Oscar, of the Fingalians, to go to the feast of the king, and that he would obtain a boon accordingly. The fairer Oscar, since he never refused a foe, departed to the hall of the king; and with him went three hundred valiant heroes, to wait upon his will and deeds. Greatly honoured and feasted we were, as we ever were in the times

that are past: and joyful and merry amongst the heroes of Cairbre in Temora.

On the last day of the feast of shells, with a bold voice Cairbre thus exclaimed: Change of spears I would have from thee, brown-haired Oscar from Albin. What change of spears dost thou want, red Cairbre of the havens of ships: since in the day of battle and conflict, myself and my spear are thine? It would not be too much for me to obtain any tribute, amercement, or rarity, in thy land. During all my life and age, whatever choice thing I asked, I must obtain it.

Any gold or precious wares, the king would ask from us, without offering us any disrespect or insult, would be under thy dominion: but exchange of spears, without exchange by lot*, would be unjust to demand; and the cause for which thou would ask it is, that I am without Fingalians, and without father. Though your father and the Fingalians were as powerful as ever they were, it would not have been too much for me all my days, whatever I ask to obtain. Were the Fingalians and my father as powerful as they were, scarcely couldst thou obtain that, or the breadth of thy two soles in Ireland.

Enmity by degrees filled the breasts of the heroes, listening to the long strife: fierce words on both sides passed between Cairbre and Oscar. I shall give you my steady word, said the red-

* Or exchange of handles.

haired Cairbre, that the sharp-pointed spear that is in thy hand, shall be the cause of thy death. Said the red Cairbre, I shall give you my lasting warrant, that I shall thrust the spear of seven points, between thy kidneys and thy navel. Other words against these I shall give, says the valiant Oscar; that I shall thrust the spear of the nine points into thy hair and face. Fierce and steady words, gave the red-haired Cairbre, that he would carry off venison and booty from Albin in a few days. That night we passed without aid, on each side of the river; a pool of water lay half way between Cairbre and Oscar.

A chief bard, with mournful music, was heard on the sweet harp, with the lament of grief; and up rose Oscar in rage, and took his arms in his victorious hands. We rose up valiant and strong, as many of our army as we had. That Oscar was discomfited and overwhelmed, we clearly understood when we heard the music of the harp. We ascended, as many of our army as were together, the mountain of Gaul. Caoilte and young Fergus by Oscar were placed in the front of the battle. The king of Laighinn, of swords, and his bloody heroes, fell by the edge of our steel a while before the fierce combat began. When we arrived at the place, and the gallant hero in a narrow valley, Cairbre was on high, opposing us as he came forth to meet us.

Five score fierce valiant heroes, by the hand of

Oscar fell, on the other side, when he was designing to force his way forward to the king of Erin. Seven score sons of chiefs, of the most puissant valour and mighty deeds, fell by the hands of Oscar, when forcing his way towards the king of Erin. Mungan, the son of Seirc the foe, who would vanquish a hundred blue swords, fell on the other side by the hands of Oscar, briskly pushing on to the king of Erin. Five score strong hardy heroes, like Cairbre, of the armies, fell on the other side by the hands of Oscar, sallying violently to the king of Erin. When the red-haired Cairbre saw his forces hewed down by Oscar, at him he darted the sharp spear that was in his hand, and pierced him between the kidneys and the navel. On his right knee Oscar fell, with the sharp-pointed spear through his skin. Another cast he darted to the other side, and by him fell the king of Erin. Raise Airt, said the king, take thy sword, and firmly stand in thy father's stead: if thou shalt live long, I think thou wilt prove thyself the son of a noble king. He darted another throw on high, deemed by us a happy deed; by adventure, the second cast, Airt, the son of Cairbre, fell.

They sent to the king in the south, Cairbre's forces, strong in fight, that they might keep the field of victory; as they observed that Oscar was tormented. But he lifted up a smooth, hard stone, from the ground, red with blood, and broke the

head of Cairbre through the helmet: the last exploit of my kind and fair son.

Rise, Oscar, with thy victorious slaughter; with thy high banner, strength and victory may attend thee. The king of Laighinn and his bands to us have drawn near.—Fix the edge of the spear in the ground, and let it support my white ribs; and if the foe shall discern me standing on my feet, farther they shall not venture to advance. O Fergus, tell us thy tale, and falsely do not deal with us: how many dauntless chiefs of war that fell in the conflict of Cairbre? The fair and beautiful Oscar is no more, who performed deeds of valour in slaying the foe: nor Colla, the son of Caoilte: nor the chiefs of the Fingalians, from Albin. How did Oscar slaughter heads? King of the Fingalians, hard it is for me to relate how many Oscar, of the strong limbs, had slain in the battle? Lift me off with you now, O Fingalians; never had you lifted me up before; carry me to Fingal's sacred hill, that you may strip me of my armour? On the shore of the north, was heard the tumult of armies, and the clanging of arms. Nimbly up skipped our heroes, when Oscar was found dead. Maid unhappy to us; twice a lie thou hadst told us; they are the ships of my grandfather coming to our aid, thou hast seen? Fingal we all saluted; although he had not saluted us; but went to the sacred hill of tears, where Oscar, of the sharp arms, lay dead? Art

thou, my son, in a worse state, than on the day of Beinneadan's battle, when the cranes could swim through thy skin, and my hand had healed thee? My remedy is not ordained, and Oscar shall never be healed. Cairbre thrust the spear of seven points, between my kidneys and my navel. I thrust the spear of nine points into his forehead; and had my fists reached his skin, no physician could ever cure him? Is thy state more dangerous, my son, than on the day of the battle of Dundalgan. The geese could have swam through thy skin, and it was my hand that cured thee. My cure, the fates have not decreed; and my soundness shall be restored no more: the deep wound of the spear, in my right side, no physician can cure. Then it was that Fingal retired to the sacred hill above us; from his eyes the tears streamed down in torrents, so he turned his back, and thus exclaimed: My own love, and the love of my love, son of my son, mild and fair. My heart leaps quick as the ouzle; never more shall Oscar arise. O! that I had fallen in thy stead, in the furious unkind battle of Cairbre; and thou, O Oscar, hadst lived to advance the front of the Fingalians east and west. It was not like even the Fingalians, that the heart of flesh in thy breast was: but like a heart of the stones of the river covered with steel.

The mournful howlings of the dogs by my side, and the groanings of the old heroes: the bewail-

ing of the people alternately, is what sadly torments my heart.

Away we lifted the fair Oscar on the shoulders, by the tallest spears; and him with serious and deliberate carriage we did bear, until we came to Fingal's sacred hill. A woman could not lament for her son; a man could not lament for his valiant brother—with a deeper grief, than every one about the hall: and all of us lamenting for Oscar. It is the death of Oscar that grieves my heart. Oscar, first of Albin's race, without thee, great is our want. Where was ever seen in thy time one hero so hardy as thee behind a sword? Trembling and gloom never departed from Fingal, from that day to the day of his death. Though I should say it, the third part of a man's food he would not relish nor desire.

THE VIRGIN,

OR

NYMPH.

A

POEM.

The Argument.

This poem relates the grief that sat heavily on Ossian's mind, when recollecting the joyful and merry days he saw in company with the Fingalians; especially the friendly safety they gave to every one who came under their protection, and their gentle and honourable conduct to all persons. In this poem of the *Virgin*, although they knew that the Spaniard would kill many of their heroes, they choosed rather to suffer death than not to protect her, since they had undertaken to do so. Although some of them were slain by this powerful hero, Oscar overcame him, and they buried him with rejoicing and honour due to the son of a king—as this poem informs us.

NOBLE Ossian, son of Fingal, sitting upon a joyful hill; great warlike hero, without dismay, I see grief on thy mind. The cause of my grief to thee, O Patrick, I would unfold; if thou art wil-

ling to hear it. It is that, I remember when the Fingalians sat on this sacred hill, in harmony of one mind. Upon this hill, as one man we were, Patrick, of the noble, liberal sentiments? I saw once the Fingalian family cheerful, great, vigorous, and joyful. Upon this hill were the Fingalians spending the time with mirth, according to our pleasure.

When we saw a young maid on the plain, coming toward us, and she alone. A courteous virgin, of the most beautiful form; of the fairest and reddest cheek; whiter than the beam-rays of the sun was the upper part of her breast, under her handsome shift. Two clear mild eyes were in her head; with beautiful robes she was clothed; bands of gold were round her neck; and a chain of gold under her precious jewels. From that family of Fingal in Albin, we all upon her fixed our hearts in love; none of us loving his own wife, but all our love centred in the virgin.

She sought the protection of Oscar, the son of the generous Ossian; and of Caolte, chief of the clan of Retha. I claim your aid, generous Fingalians, whether sons of kings, or high powerful chiefs

Who is in pursuit of thee, said they, maid of the most beautiful form? In pursuit of me, fair hero of the noblest race of Fingalians, is the great Iolann, warlike and quick; the son of the king of Spain. I much fear, liberal Fingalians, that

you shall be slain and destroyed by the tall, strong, warlike hero: his arms are sharp pointed and strong.

Up rose the four sons of Fingal—Carrul, and red-haired Raoine, Faolan, and young Feargus; and with their high and mighty voice thus began: Where did ever that man travel, east or west, or in the four quarters of the globe, the brains of whose head we would not see before we would suffer him to take thee off with him, O nymph! Clean branch, white palmed, sweet voiced, noble virgin of the pleasant, delightful, blue eyes, sit thou here under our protection. Though bold be thy pursuer, the tall hero shall not take thee off, great and valiant as thou deemest him.

O Ossian, of the profound dark sayings, at what distance was the tall hero from you? or did the smoke of ire appear in his face in the pursuit of the nymph? We saw the tall proud hero coming to a haven from the ocean, and drawing his ship on shore; and with dire inclination coming towards us. He was a tall, white-palmed, bold hero; with fierce, wild, terrible foreign spears, and with furious rage, like a fire-brand, coming forwards to the Fingaliaus. A great, victorious, deadly sword, for dreadful massacre, the valiant hero had; a shield of gold, of the largest form, was in the warrior's left hand. His mail was high, long, and superb: his strong breast-plate spotted and puissant: his helmet hardy, and fet-

tered above the steady face of the hero. Vestments of silk clothed him, bound by ornaments of satin: his two spears, from their bottom of hardest steel, rising up, like strong pointed bristles, upon his shoulders. Like a man without judgment, he skirmished forward, and did not salute Fingal or the Fingalians. Of Fingal's heroes three hundred fell by him, and also the nymph. The four sons of Fingal he bound, and nine nines of their followers, of the great, warlike, magnanimous race, the children of Baoisge, offspring of Trenmor: he threatened the sons of Morna, and the race of Morven from Selma's tower.

When the generous Oscar heard that the sons of Baoisge had met with abusive contempt, he took his arms in his prosperous hands, and no longer listened to the miserable tale. My son turned to him upon the heath: Oscar, full of heroic rage, combated the fierce champion of direful mind. Iolunn turned to my son, who strenuously fought against the great boned, wounding, nimble, quick-handed, high-leaping hero. As a torrent of a river in a valley, the destruction of their blood was so violent: as fire-brands from the hearth, such was the din of the bloody heroes. Oscar made a clean manly stroke towards the brave hero of undaunted heart, and by that stroke of his steel severed from the body the head of the king of Spain. Ulin, and all our bards, sung

the lament of grief on the sloping side of the mountain: the victory and fame of Oscar was sung; and to him was given the right hand of the seven armies*. The funeral of a king's son we gave to Iolunn, of the fiercest mind; and every one of the Fingalians lamented, with tears, the death of the maid.

Upon this sacred hill is his grave-stone, Patrick: it is a true tale: the maid's stone is on the other side. Good and great were they all in their time; every one of them was a valuable jewel. Peace be to their souls together; and may blessing attend you, Ossian.

* Companies; battles.

CONLAOCH.

A

POEM.

The Argument.

The history of Cuchulin in his chariot, relates to us that he was a courageous warrior, gallant, stout, and brave. He had a son by Aoife, his lover, in Albin. His mother named him Conlaoch. Cuchulin, being commander-in-chief of the armies of Erin, promised to Aoife, that he would return to Albin at a certain time; and that Aoife would be his wife. But he did not perform his engagement. When Conlaoch came to age, he was taught chivalrous feats of valour in Dunscaich, in the Isle of Skye, the most famous place at that time, for teaching young gallant heroes every royal exercise necessary to qualify them for war. Aoife had her son taught in all the games and feats of arms, which she knew Cuchulin was master of; except one called the *Gath-bolg*. At that time, it was customary with heroes to practice the *Gath-bolg* when they fought with arrows in the water. When Conlaoch came to full strength, his mother put him under a vow, that he would go to Erin, and not to tell there who he was until he would bring his father bound to Albin. Aoife knew well that Cuchilin would kill his son with the *Gath-bolg*; and all this plan she formed in revenge for Cuchulin's disappointing her by his breach of promise. Conlaoch went to Erin, and went first where Conull the step-father of Cuchulin was, and bound him. Conull sent a message to Cuchulin to inform him that he was bound. He came to loose his bands, and when Conlaoch refused to tell who he was, his father fought with him and killed him.

THE sorrowful tale is lately heard, a cause of grief to us: the heró from Inis-Phail we cannot mention but with melancholy and heavy hearts? The royal sons of the slow carriage, from Dunscaich to the land of Conul, with their noble young sons in the field, are come within the plains of Cuig-uladh. There came to us a fierce hero, the courageous, valiant Conlaoch? By him valourous deeds of prowess were performed from Dunscaich to Erin. He struck the shield on the plain, and cut the turf* of conflict; none of his appearance the king or his heroes ever beheld in the five divisions† of Erin.

To the other chiefs Cranchur spoke aloud: Who is desirous to meet the young hero, to ask him the news of his race and generation, and to accept no denial from him? Conull departed with his strong hand-weapon, to ask the news of the hero; and the fruit and effect of the race of heroes from whom he descended was seen, from Conull's being bound with thongs by Conlaoch's mighty hands, and a hundred valiant heroes more. A tale this, says Conull's wife, who saw the deed great to be told: thou hast treated my hero with disdain and

*Signals for battle.

†(Cuig) fifth, and Uladh, Ulster, the fifth division or part of Ireland. It is called Ulin in Mr. M'Pherson's translation.

contempt. Cuchulin, a match for thee I shall find: and the disgrace of Conull he shall ransom and revenge.

Tell Cuchulin from me, who dwells in the joyful and beautiful fort, that many are the sons in the field who are bound, in the plains of Cuiguladh. A messenger went to Cuchulin, to the high famous king of Uladh: to Dun-dealan, pleasant and splendid, by the sun-rays, to the ancient sentimental mild tower of the Fingalians. Conachar thus spoke to Cuchulin: Long hast thou delayed coming with thy help; and the nimble Conull, of the slender steeds, led captive and bound: a hundred of his people besides.

Sorrowful to me is the captivity of him, who gave relief and comfort to my people. Fatal it must be to fight with steel a hero who had bound Conull. Then Cuchulin's consort spoke: Do not think of declining the combat, hero of the clean blue eyes; thou valiant hand, who never fearest: call to mind thy step-father, and him bound. When Cuchulin, of the hardy blue swords, thought of Conull bound, he advanced, and bold were his steps, to ask news of the powerful hero.

Said Cuchulin, since I happened to come forth to meet thee; and I am like a hero that refuses not the conflict; son of sweet song, who art thou, and what is thy country? Under a vow I came from home, to reveal my tale to none; and were I to

disclose it to any under the sun, it would be to one of thy extraordinary appearance. A combat thou must give, or tell thy tale as a friend: take thy choice, young hero: it would be imprudent for thee to desire my battle. In the feats of steel I shall enter the list with thee, Cuchulin, from the Dun of Caledons; but sad to thee, another day shall be, if thou woundest thy heroic son.

In battle the heroes met. Rough and fierce was their equal pride. The son is wounded; and the want of the Gath-bolg was the cause of the wound. Son, tell us now thy tale, since I happen to be the cause of thy loss. In a short time, thy grave stone shall be raised: conceal not now thy country. Since now thou hast extorted that tale from me, take up with thee my spear and my hardy sword: the blade of steel I obtained furbished. I am Conlaoch, the son of Cuchulin! the lawful heir of Dun-dealgan: the favourite which thou hast left in grief in Dunscaich to be trained to arms. Seven years have I been in Duntarve, learning feats of heroism. The feat with which I fell by thee, I only wanted in my discipline of war. But, noble and proud father, why didst not thou understand my intention, when I threw the spear feeble and crooked, with the shaft opposite? Cuchulin, of the mild fair skin, who wouldest open every dangerous breach, wilt thou not behold, when now I am almost breathless, what finger filled this ring? But

bring my curse to my mother, since she bound me by vows; the cause of my exerting my valour and strength, under thy artful warlike prowess, O! Cuchulin!

I will bring thy curse to thy mother, to Dunscaich, full of guile; it was the number of her crafty charms, that caused thy blood to flow in red torrents. Cuchulin fell on the ground, and the shield and sword of Conlaoch were opposite on the plain? I am, saith he, the man, alas! who killed his son; may I never wear a spear or mail; may this very hand suffer torment, as it is the hand that wounded thee? Happy it is for the victorious Laoire; happy for the nobles of Gaul; happy for Liath, the son of Daoire, that he was not the instrument of thy death? Happy for Cormac, of ships, that he was not the one who wounded thy side; were it so, a ransom for thee, a hundred of his people would fall by my hand alone. Alas! alas! valiant Conlaoch, my son, woe unto me that I have shortened thy life? Were you and I alive, I would not this night be alone and sad? Were Conlaoch and I in sound health, to perform deeds of valour side by side; we could take pledges and boons from the people of Albin, and Erin, from sea to sea. Alas! I am tormented; and the sharp spear of sadness piercing my heart. Dig thou up the stone of my grave on the green hill of blue grass. My son's spear I took away with me; the shield, the spear, and sword of

Conlaoch my son; long and sad did I thus lament,
as a wife, without son or brother. Woe of woes!
and alas again! now ascending the top of the
mountain, with the arms of my son in the one
hand, and his patrimony in the other.

CIUHACH.

A

POEM.

The Argument.

There is something remarkable in this poem not to be found in all the other history of the Fingalians. Beyond all people who ever lived, there is no account of the Fingalians ever turning their backs to the foe but one step on this day; and they fled only the length of the sole of their foot, that is, they turned back until the ends of their toes were where their heels were when they stood. Now, our heroes, in the late war, were famous—as the duke of Wellington, and other generals, who defended the kingdom, and conquered that tyrannical enemy Bonaparte; yet, we know, that these heroic chiefs often fled with their armies. But the Fingalians' mode of warfare was different from that of the present times; for in those days they fought with the sword, spear, and bow, whereby a valiant hero had an opportunity of proving himself a soldier: and, indeed, if there were no written history of the victorious deeds of the duke of Wellington, General Graham, or those other illustrious chiefs who were instrumental in keeping the enemy from our doors, yet it would be unnatural and absurd, in some hundred years after this, that the posterity of the present generation, now in Britain, should deny that such men as the duke of Wellington, General Graham, and those other heroes, ever existed, as some in our own times deny the existence of the Fingalians. The conclusion we must infer from these circumstances, is, that being blinded by prejudice, they would wish that no heroes existed to protect the kingdom. This poem relates the victory which Oscar obtained over Cíthach and his army.

By the death with which the Fingalians died, a step they never fled from the foe, but one little jerk upon the shore west of Dun-gallan. Ciu-hach we found not in the Dun; and had we found him, our fate would have been worse: we were tossed and reproached by Euvan and Tros-dan. Gaul went to try the strength of the mail with Euvan the son of Gorm-uileach: and Tros-dan, fierce in battle, reproached the valiant Oscar with obtaining assistance. He threatened the children of the sons of Morni, the brave and magnanimous heroes: he threatened the sons of Sgain, the royal race who often proved their valour. He threatened Raóine, the son of Fingal, and the Bailives from Boilives. The Fingalians then all listened as if they had never heard a word. With flight and hurry they turned their back a little on the shore. Oscar, of the victorious arm, went forth to meet the son of Nu-aran in conflict. Showers of blood flowed, and hot smoke rose in the air; hard steel clanged with steel; faces of strong heads were besmeared with blood. Shields were cleft to the ground by the handsome son of Nuaran. Oscar victoriously leaped forth, deemed by us a hardy step. By the sharp edge of his sword, with ease* he sever-

* Without peril.

ed his head from his body. Blessing, son, attend thy hand, victory attend thy deeds and conflicts! Take the head by the gullet, and carry it to the presence of thy grand-father. The head of a king's son, in pursuit of booty, who needed a hundred ships, I would not carry over the sea for all the riches of the world.

I shall not allow thee that, spoke the great Gaul from Cruachan: take hold of the head without awe, and carry it before the chief. By thy hand, Gaul, son of Morni, I would not yield to thee the honour of valour. I would not give one of thy father's sons for the seed of Raoine, of first fame. The stout and trusty Oscar, in a masculine, manly manner, leaped forth; and, in opposition to the Fingalians, interred the head and the body together: he fixed the warlike, graceful head, to the mild, great, and beloved body: seven feet deep in the earth he laid the good and beautiful son of Nuaran: he discovered nothing to any man; neither to Ossian nor to Iolann. Up rose the graceful and generous Ossian, and laid hold of his sword and shield; placed his hard helmet on his head; he seized his two spears and his blue blade, and lifted up his complete warlike belt against the son of the high chiefs. The sons of Ronan and sons of Saoi, with their banners side by side, went forward beneath the hill of victory, about Oscar, of hardy arms. The sons of Dearg, of valiant

steel, with their banners waving above them, went forth below the victorious hill, surrounding Oscar, of brave fame. The Fingalian heroes, with their banners waving above their heads, went forth below the hill of victory, round about Oscar, of valiant fame. The five sons of Ailvinn, by Fingal, the first five heroes in Erin, bloody Caoral, of booties, and valiant Aaral, of battles. Faolan, and Raoine, the sons of Fingal, and the brave Aogan, of public fame: all these five were completely equipped with their shields and arms.

O great Oscar, who never listened to the sound of bells, what now is the cause of thy delay? Round thy head are the sons of the Fingalians, and the chiefs of Trenmor's race. I shall not combat the Fingalians, nor great Ossian, of strong shields, since they are not all here; of the loss of one man alone, I shall not be the cause? Never was my own father in battle or conflict, or any time of need, but he was a sufficient match for a chief of three armies, let his steel be never so hard, and would value the fair white leg of his lover, and her smooth kind body the same as his own beloved soul. Do thou that, lovely son, great, fair, handsome hero; give peace to Iolann, of the feasts, as he is the stoutest hero in Temora. If you could remember the battle of the hills, or the day of the battle of Benedan, and suffering to be struck by Gaul, in the land of Fingal, of shells and horns, there it was that Comal, of feasts, fell

by the hand of strong Iolann. It was not Iolann, nor could a hundred like him kill my father; but all the multitudes of the world, kidnapping the valiant Comal, of heroic deeds. Feargus gathered together the seven armies of the hardy Fingalians, and they made a lasting and friendly peace with hardy and brave Gaul. To Fingal, the son of Comal, of hard steel, Ciuhach proposed, as terms of peace, that he should get the head of Osian in his hand, and the head of Oscar, first of men; the head of Gaul and Conan, one after another, all of one army. It was when Oscar was in Greece, of swords, that these conditions he proposed.

Up rose then the heroes for the combat, Ciuhach and Fingal, the chief of the Fingalians. A youth on the plain spoke aloud, "I see Oscar coming." Thus in due time came Oscar, of the clean noble eyes, intrepid, tall, and keen, hardy, bloody, and confident.

Dauntless is thy voice in my absence, reproachful Ciuhach, son of Nuaran; I killed thy brethren, also the whole of thy grandmother's race. Although all that crossed the eastern ocean were equal to thee in fame and combat, none of them would escape my powerful arm, but those I would scorn and ridicule. The whole of Ciuhach's heroes in the Dun advanced behind Oscar: also, Oscar's heroes advanced behind Ciuhach. Oscar lifted his strong hand from his shoulder, and be-

headed Ciuhach before the Fingalians of Albin. When the noble Ewir saw Ciuhach's head upon the plain, she shed torrents of tears from her cleanly and piercing eyes.

We sailed the ship to the confines of Nuaran's city. We established people of renown in the kingdom, where the great battle was fought. We pursued the woman who resided there, the queen of Spain. The same queen became wife to the valiant Oscar.

Such was the direful conflict between the beautiful Oscar and Ciuhach: let him come east or west, my son would sever his head from his neck? None existed under the sun equal to Treunmor, Trathall, and Comhal. Considering my father, no wonder though I am sad. To skirmish with sword and mail, and to be revenged on their foes; but generous, mild, and hospitable, to those who claimed friendship. Also, to young heroes at Fingal's tower in Selma; although I am now without the light of the sun, without the shell, or venison of the lofty hills.

OSSIAN'S ADDRESS

TO THE

RISING SUN.

O THOU that rollest* above, round as the full-orbed hard shield of the mighty! whence is thy unsullied beam? whence, O Sun! thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth in the strength of thy beauty; the stars hide their motions from our view; the moon darkens in the sky, concealing herself in the eastern wave. Thou art on thy journey alone; who will presume to attend thy course? The oaks fall on the high precipice; the stoney heap and the hoary cliff sink under age: Ocean ebbs and flows again; the moon herself is lost in the sky: Thou alone triumphest in the undecaying joys of thy light. When tempests darken round the world, with angry thunders, and sharp-edged lightnings, thou lookest in thy beauty

* A shiubhlas. Travellest, movest, advancest, journeyest. Applicable also to rotatory motion.

from the storm*, smiling amidst the disorder of the sky. But to me thy light is vain, whether thou spreadest thy gold-yellow curls on the face of the eastern cloud* (banishing night from every place, except from the eye of the bard that never shall see thy light); or when thou tremblest in the west, at the dusky doors of the Ocean. (But thus aged, feeble, and grey, thou shalt yet be alone; thy progress in the sky shall be slow, and thou shalt be blind like me on the hill. Dark as the changeful moon, shall be thy wandering in the heavens; thou shalt not hear the awakening voice of the Morning, like the heroes that rise no more. The hunter shall survey the plain, but shall not behold thy coming form. Sad he will return, his tears pouring forth:—"My favourite hound! the sun has forsaken us!")—Perhaps thou art like me, at times strong, feeble at times; our years descending from the sky, and hastening together towards their end. Rejoice, O sun! as thou advancest in the vigour of thy youth. Age is sad and unlovely: it is like the useless moon in the sky, gliding through a dark cloud on the field, when the grey mist is by the side of the stoney heaps; the blast of the north is on the plain; the traveller is languid and slow. (The light of the

* Noise.

† The passages within the parenthesis, are not in the Society's edition.

night will then rejoice, when the Son of brightness
has departed.)

OSSIAN'S ADDRESS

TO THE

SETTING SUN.

HAST thou left thy blue course in the sky, blameless Son, of the gold-yellow locks? the doors of Night open before thee; and the pavilion of thy repose is in the west. The billows crowd slowly around to view thy bright cheeks: they lift their heads in fear, when they beheld thee so lovely in thy sleep, and shrink away with awe from thy sides. Sleep thou on in thy cave, O Sun; and let thy return again be with joy.

* [As a beam of the wintry Sun, swift-gliding over the plain of Leno, so are the days of Fingal's race, like the Sun† gleaming by fits through the shower. The dark grey clouds of the sky have descended, and snatched the cheering beam from the hunter: the leafless branches of the wood are

* The Gaelic of this passage is in Dr. Smith's collection, 8vo.

† Like the broken light of the Sun, gleaming through showers.

mourning, and the tender herbs of the mountain droop in sadness. But the Sun will yet revisit the fair grove, whose boughs shall bloom anew; and the trees of the young summer shall look up smiling, to the son of the sky.]

AD SOLEM SURGENTEM
OSSIANI FINGALIDÆ CARMEN,

Latinâ civitate donatum.

QUI sublime meas orbe volubili,
Plenus, ceu clypeus Bellipotentium,
O Sol! unde reluces?

Æternum unde fluit jubar?
Majestate venis fulgidus aureâ!
Vanescent rutilis sidera flammulis;
Pallet Luna, sub undas

Condens occiduas caput.
Solus carpis iter. Quis comes audeat
Tecum cœruleum scandere tramitem?
Solvit saxa vetustas,

Montis robora corruunt;
Alternis refluunt gurgitibus freta;
Mutans Luna vices æthere deficit;
Solus luce perenni

Tu gaudens, peragis viam.
Si, quando tenebris orbis inhorruit,
Nimbos pervolitent fulmina turbidos,
Cæli ex arce, serenus.
Ridens, murmura despicias.

Frústrà sed misero Fingalidæ nites
Hand visure oculis, seu faciem super
Crinis nubis Eoæ

Late spargitur aureus,
Seu fuscam tremulos Oceani jacis
Ad portam radios. Sed tibi forsitan,
Ut mî, defluit ætas

Cælo, limen ad ultimum
Languentis senii. Viribus O tuis
Sol! lætare, vigor dum solidus tibi:

Torpet fœda senectus;

Luna emittit inutile
Campos sic vacuos despiciens jubar,
Dum canis, nebulæ molibus incubant;
Caurus sibilat; erro

Tarde progreditur tremens,

EJUSDEM,
AD SOLEM OCCIDUUM,

CARMEN.

DE sinis flavo radiate crino,
Cæulos cursus peragraræ cœli?
En tibi furvæ spatiosa noctis
Aula patescit.

Hesperus fesso tibi dat cubile;
Erigunt curvi sua dorsa fluctus,
Ut reclinatum videant securos
Carpere somnos.

En tui vultus roseo nitore,
Membra dum captant placidam quietem,
Territi, retro fugiunt, et alto
Gurgite sidunt.

Dulcis, O puro generate cælo,
Sit tibi fuscâ requies in aulâ!
Mox bea terras redivivus almæ
Munere flammæ*.

* The above Latin version was translated by Mr. Ewen M'Lachlan,
of Old Aberdeen, from Stewart's collection.

MOR-GLAN

AND

MIN-ONN.

WHO is this that descendeth from the mist, and poureth forth his wounds on the wind? Oh! deep is that wound in his breast, and dim is yonder deer by his side! Yonder is the ghost of the fair Mor-glan, the king of Lia'-glas of many streams; he came to Morven with his love, the daughter of Sora, of the pleasant and gentle countenance. He ascended the mountain to the summit, and Min-onn he left behind in his house; thick mist descended with the night of the clouds; the streams roared, and the ghosts shrieked. The young maid again ascended the mountain, and saw the deer through the mist; with choice aim she drew the string, and the arrow is fixed in the breast of the youth. In the sacred hill, we entombed the hero, together with his arrow and dart.

in his narrow house, and gladly would Min-onn lie under the same clod, but she returned with sorrow to her own land. Heavy was her grief and sad, but the stream of years have rolled along, and she is now cheerful with the virgins of Sora.

Fierce to me is the roaring of thy waves, and the grey-headed seas beating against the bottom of thy hills, and the swelling fierce blasts from the south; it is not for my profit that you have blown.

Now the heroes drew to close fight, like two opposite streams in strong conflict, and every wind strengthening their labour; their strokes were fierce, loud-sounding, and deadly; heavy, quick, and bloody were the valiant heroes, like waves meeting from opposite sides, when they are driven to flight by the howling storm, upon a hard cliff half-way between two points. Their long tough spears were broke asunder, their darts fled off in pieces; their polished swords were in their hands, valiantly and bloodily they fought, like dangerous, leaping bears; like two fiery meteors nimbly running along the sky, or like two strong ghosts contending with one another. As falls the lofty green pine tree by the strong blast of the desert in Morven, so the echoing rock yielded and shook, the earth moved underneath and trembled; thus did the noble hero fall under the hard-tearing steel of Cah-uil.

I fell in the beginning of the conflict, and my fame will not rise in the song; but it is by the sword of the hero I fell, and my valour shall become renowned by his fame; it was the sword of the king of Innis-tore, that wounded in the kidneys the mighty hero. Happy* be thy soul, O bard, let me hear thy loud voice on high, and let me ride on thy storm, clothed with the grey mist of the forest. Yonder flat stone at the green morass, raise up at my head. Let it be carried over the sloping feeble rivulets, in which the aged shall sing when he shall not find it there.

Maid of Sora, my love, though in this field fell thy chosen lover, let thy tears fall in streams; martial eye of the hot battles, my spear hang up in thy hall, the spear of my love, though it wounded me, upon which I sailed through the high billows of the ocean. When Ca-huil heard that speech, sadness and sorrow sat heavy on his mind: he fell upon the face of his son, for the shield of his forefathers he knew. Alas! and and alas, my beloved son, thou shalt wake no more for ever! Alas! and alas, alas! my tormenting pain, pity it is that it is I who remains after thee!

* Farewell to thy soul,

THE DEATH OF DERMID.

The Argument.

Dermid, being a most beautiful man, was, upon a night quelling a battle of dogs; and, being warmed in this employment and being a little angry, his face shined as a lion-like hero; and such was the urbanity of his mind, although he was in haste, that the beauty and chastity of a virgin appeared in his venerable countenance. Grainne, the wife of Fingal, who was brother to Dermid's mother, observed the valour and excellency of his appearance, fell in love with him; and she pretended that she would die, unless Dermid would go along with her to the desert. Dermid was not willing; but to prevent the death of the wife, he took her council. This poem relates the misfortune that befel them both, on account of Fingal's love to his wife, and his jealousy of his sister's son; for although Fingal did not cut off Dermid, yet he executed a deceitful plot in order to have him put to death by a wild boar. Grainne also died at the same time, for she voluntarily fell upon an arrow, when she saw that Dermid was dead, and thus Fingal lost them both at the same time.

ATTEND a little, if you would have a song on
the kind company who departed from us; respec-

ting Grainne, and the generous Fingal, and the son of Duivne, of woeful tales.

In the vale Shi *, and the vale beside † it, where sweet is the voice of deer and elk, and where the Fingalians have often been from the east and west after their hounds; and on that stream of blue Gulbein, of the most beautiful hills, oft have the rivulets been of a red hue; after the Fingalians hunted the deer. They played on the son of Duivne, of red cheeks, and deep was the deceit, and urged him to go to the chace in Guilbein ‡, since he could not be overcome by arms.

Do not answer their voice, O Dermid, and do not attend the deceitful hunt, and to Fingal the son of Comal do not approach, as sorrowful he is without his spouse.

I shall answer the voice of the hunt, in spite of the wrath of the king of the Fingalians.—From his deep sleep they roused the boar, and a watch

* Near.

† Glen-shi in Perthshire, there is a glen or vale near Glen-shi, called Glén-beg, or the little vale, there is also the boar's bed; there is *Tul-lach-Dhiarmid*, or Dermid's eminence, *Lochan Dhiarmid*, or Dermid's pool: several marks of antiquity besides, bears the most concurrent testimonies, that it was at Glen-shi, Perthshire, that Dermid was killed and interred.

‡ The editors of this volume have been informed by some proprietors of the first respectability in Perthshire, that Gulbein, the boar's bed, Dermid's eminence, Dermid's pool, &c. was handed down by tradition as the names of these places, time immemorial. Also, several gentlemen of property in the immediate neighbourhood of Glen-shi, affirmed that the above-named places have been mentioned in their characters upwards of three centuries past.

was set for him up in the vale, listening to the bawling noise of the Fingalians, and they keenly in pursuit of him. Fierce was the aged wild boar that came from the lofty echoing rocks; longer was his claw than the dart of a spear, and stronger his bristles than a javelin from a trunk. They let loose the hounds in pursuit of him—Fingal's dogs and his hunters; they have sent the white boar down the side of Leodram, and keen they were to tear him.

Son of Duivne, valiant hero, if a great exploit by thee was done, take off the head of the wild boar: this is the time to prove thy strength. When he saw the whole of the beast, from his white, smooth, soft side, the son of Duivne, of sharp arms, threw the dart and twisted the spear in the heel of the boar. He drew the spear from the fair, white fist, to thrust it into its body, and into three pieces he broke the shaft, without piercing the boar. From the scabbard he drew the old sword, as by it the victory in every battle was won; the monster he killed, and yet himself was sound and safe.

Sadness rested upon bountiful Fingal, and west of the hill he laid himself down, as the son of Duivne, of the victorious arms, from the boar escaped safe. Ruminating a while in silent mood, Fingal thus began, and miserable to be told it was:—Dermid, measure the boar how many feet there are between its snout and its heel? The re-

quest of Fingal he did not refuse, and sad to us is his achievement. He measured the boar on his back—the son of Duivne, of heavy foot: sixteen feet of good measure is the length in the back of the wild boar. That is not at all the length; measure him again. Dermid, measure again the boar steadily against the bristles, and for the deed thou shalt get as a boon the choice of the sharp-edged keen swords. The son of Duivne, of heavy foot, again measured the boar, an unprosperous expedition indeed: the mortal, strong bristles pierced the soles of the hero, who was valiant in battle. O Fingal, said Dermid, good son of my king, to me give one drink out of thy shell for my relief, as my strength and my vigour are gone, from the little lake give me a drink to aid me.

Why should I to thee give a drink, and wherefore should I relieve thy hardship, as thou hast never done so much for my good as thou hast in one day done for my loss? In no place whatever, here or there, east or west, have I done thee any injury†, but going a captive‡ with Grainne, and her love enchanting me by the sorcery of her charms. In the house of the fire-brands when thou wast surrounded, prosperous to thee was my strife, when Deud-geal was wounding thee, and thou wast straitened in the face of danger. Pro-

† Evil.

‡ In grief, anguish, affliction.

fitable to thee was I another day, when Deudgeal and her army were afflicting thee; I was the hardy victorious hero in that strife to defend thee from every fray. Dost thou remember the day of the battle of Conhuil; Cairbre and his host were before thee, I and the Fingalians behind me were advancing: woe is me! that ever I set my face to Beingulbuin. Oh! woe is me, that I set my face to Beingulbin, I, and my strength in floods streaming from me, and although I am the son of Duivne, farewell to courtship forever. Although I should have the comfort to drink of the water of Beirve, it could not be a consolation to my wounds; and although I am the son of Duivne, at the bottom of Beingulbuin, great is my distress; and if the maids of the Fingalians had heard of my being wounded on this ridge of hills, their pillows would be mournful. Woe to me! that I ever set my face to Beingulbuin.

The beds of the two are in the rock, and a year Fingal lamented them. A rivulet runs above them, and it is not sea water, and it shall not wet Grainne or Dermid. Alas! this is the hill of woes! great is the sorrow to speak of it, and Gorm-uil under the stones; this is the bed in which Dermid was; this is the bed in which Dermid* lay! This is the bed in which the lion

* It is from this event that the clan of the Campbell's, who derive their pedigree from this Dermid, have assumed the boar's head for the

was, who never refused the strife, and as Cuchul-
lin, who never thought of fear. My love is Der-
mid of the groves, my sister's son of the race of
heroes! Now his blue eye is under the stones, this
is the bed in which Dermid was; wretched was
the counsel which first I formed, my sisters son
to slay for the sake of any woman in the world, and
this night she shall not follow me. Blue and grey
was in his eye, smoothness and beauty in his
cheek, strength and valour was in the hero, freely
under his fair skin. His might was like a torrent
of water going forth to vanquish his enemy in the
field, in haste*, as the eagle of the sky, or as the
darting of a fish running in the sea. Valorous
chief, of more beautiful hair than any young hero
of the Fingalians; tranquil may be thy golden
locks under the weight of the smooth clod †. I

crest of their arms. In the composition of the latter bards, they are
called *Sliochd Dhiarmid an Tuirc*, or, "The race of Dermid who slew
the boar: That clans and families, so ancient as that of the Campbells,
should derive their pedigree from Ossian's heroes, is an invincible proof
of the esteem in which Ossian and his heroes were held since, their es-
tablishment in Scotland.

* Quickness.

† The learned and pious Dr. Smith, late of Campbleton, published an
edition of this poem. (See *Sean-dana*), it must be acknowledged that
Dr. Smith obtained the poem more full than it is inserted here.
He mentions that it has been supposed by some, Glenco in Ar-
gyleshire, and by others Strath-Conan in Murray to be the scene where
Dermid was wounded. Dr. Smith was a gentleman of highly respecta-
ble abilities, as an author, and a devout minister of the gospel, he would
not offer to the public but genuine truth. He does not affirm Glenco,
or Strath-Conan, to be the place where Dermid was wounded and inter-

am like a lonely branch, mouldy, soft, and without leaves; no tender bough or twig is near it, but the whistling blasts of sorrow lamenting in its top: nigh is the tempest that shall scatter its aged withered sprigs through the vale, round the bed of Dermid, and the valiant heroes at the bottom of Beingulbuin, of green windings. This sacred hill, though green was its hue, when first we approached it. Woe to me, this night red with the blood of the champion of the sweetest voice. Upon the hill in Glen-shi, of the wild-boar, we interred the handsome Grainne, the daughter of Cuchulin, Diarmid and his white hounds. Although this day I am miserable, there was a time I was not feeble, without scarcity of men or the feast. Behold, every thing in the world has its own turn.

red, therefore, it admits of no doubt, as it has been urged above, but Glen-shi, in Perthshire, is the very place where this woful catastrophe happened. Numerous instances that would be too tedious to relate here, might be adduced to establish the veracity of what is already stated.

THE COMBAT
OF
FINGAL AND GARV.

THE wave scourgeth the sea, and the roaring
sound of the wind is on the mountains of Erin;
the gray morning is on the ridge* of the ocean. I
see the oak rolling up and down on the hill;
Who is under† yonder high fire? Or, is it the sun
that shines on Cromleac? The sails are hauled
down, and then the oars, and the ship is steered
to the land.

Raoine and Faolan, my sons, blow Fingal's
war-trumpet, and ascend the rugged mountain of
Erin, and call to the ancestors of Lochlin.
Three days I shall remain on the shore, waiting
the arrival of the rough champion in his armour;

* Face.

† Beneath.

let him come, and all his race: O strong are the friends of Erin. Fair-smooth Raoine quickly broke off, as the lightning of a mountain in time of storm; and dark Faolan, of furious rage, as the black cloud in harvest, on the blue canopy of the sky. There was heard upon the mountains of Erin, the loud roaring of the race of the sea, as a hundred rapid torrents from the rock, as a hundred rocks tumbling down from Ardbein; gloomy and rough, in good order, the hosts of Lochlin descended from the heights. Youth of the combat, rugged champion, here thou hast assembled all who were over sea. Surrounded by the water of the tempests thou art now come, said Fingal, as the dark shade of a mountain in the desert. Let us take thy hand in friendship; thou art the chief champion of battles: to-day let us rest and be joyful, to-morrow let us fight the strenuous combat, and cleave the sounding shields. To-morrow, Garv and Fingal, upon the ground, shall have the feast.

O Ossian, of the most noble spear; Gaul, look to thy sword, said Fingal; Faolan, let thy yew be bent; Fergus, send a bare dart through the sky: lift up your shields like the moon; every ready spear direct quickly upwards, like lightning in the gape of the hill. This is the day for cleaving heads; O great hero, of the stoutest mind, iron-targets shall be broken in shivers. As the wind of the night in the oak of Morven, as a hundred

great streams from the desert, like the clouds of the sky, like the thick ocean, like certain high flames on the heaths, so the foes of the battle of Erin met, noisy and dauntless.

With strokes every helmet rang; every shield resounded, spears were broken in pieces, and bright sparks from them leaped forth. Every hard bending bow made a snorting noise with its string, and nimble grey clouds of smoke rose in the sky: heroes were stretched on the cold earth, and the groans of people were heard among the mountains of Erin. Race of the cold vales, said Fingal, lift up each shield like the moon: follow me with loud noise, like a tempest, and cut off the foes of Erin. The king marched away, powerful and valiant, as the shade of a cloud on the windy mountains, as the dark bending blast on the hill, it blew, and they fell by his side. There was the bloody fray; there was the terrible distress: red-handed, sharp-pointed death strode along, and the vestige of the strokes was dreadful*. Bloody! O bloody was the king, when his sword gleamed in the sky†! Near him, as a firebrand, was Raoine; and Gaul, as the vapour of the clouds; swifter than the wind was Fergus; and Faolan, as the bending mist of the mountains. Like a rock I went forth to meet them, and Fingal sweeming in victory was the joy of my soul.

* Direful.

† Air.

Steady and weighty was my steel, and many were the dead under the hand of Ossian.

At that time, my locks were not so grey, and with age my head did not shake; the sight of my eyes was not extinguished, and my feet, without strength, did not fail.

THE FINGALIANS'

GREATEST HUNTING.

The Argument.

Perhaps, it may appear to some incredible, that so many deers as are mentioned in this poem, were killed by the Fingalians in one day. But, when we consider that the Fingalians lived, for the most part of their time, on venison, and that they kept a vast number of grey-hounds, and they, themselves, were nimble, valiant, and strong; we may easily believe, that they might have performed deeds by means of their dogs, that appear astonishing to us now. It is probable, that the scene of this great chace was in the isle of Skye, in the Strath, on the estate of Lord M'Donald, and of Alexander M'Alaster, Esq. of Strathaird.

OSSIAN, O sweet is thy voice to us! Happy also may the soul of Fingal be! Rehearse to us how many deers fell by you on the mountain of white* hills. Relate to us first thy tale; blessed be thy

† *Ban fionn* means *fair women*. But it appears to be *beian fionn*, fair hills, or white hills.

mouth without guile. Were you clad in armour each day you went to the chace in the mountain? Without our warlike habits and arms we went not to the chace. Clad in our mail and high helmet we ever were, with two great spears in every heroe's hand, a green shield that would prove victorious, a hard sword for cleaving heads, a bow of steel and of yew, and fifty arrows in a quiver; and to traverse the world at large, where could be found a match to Fingal? In the greatness of his race, and greatness of valour, no man ever went beyond him.

Magnanimous were we to the west, at the chace on the mountain of fair hills. Clerk, head of the clergy, beautiful was the bright sun above us.

Fingal sat with Bran upon the plain beneath the hill. Every Fingalian sat upon the hill of the chace till the stag had started. We let loose our three thousand hounds. Great was their strength, and matchless their swiftness. Every hound killed two stags before the end of the chace. Bran was only a whelp, yet he killed one stag more than the rest. We killed six thousand and one stags on the plain beneath the hill. In all my experience I never saw a chace like this.

When the chase ended, Patrick of the church, our three thousand hounds, fell by a hundred wild boars. We killed the boars that wrought mischief on the heath. By the prowess of our sword and hand, we prevailed. Many a gene-

rous and bloody Fingalian, who sat on the hill of Innis-crot; and with nothing but the thong of his dog in his hand, returning from the slaughter of the wild boars. There related to you is Fingal's chace, good son of Ailpin, of warm vows; and more melodious than the sound of thy music going to church, was that day to me.

CONULL GULBUIN.

A
POEM.

The Argument.

Conull Gulbuin came to the Fingalians to revenge the deaths of his father and grandfather. It appears that he had slain seven hundred of them before Oscar contended with him. But this hero overcame him; and although Oscar was wounded, the Fingalians rejoiced when he struck off the head of Conull; and at last they interred this foe with the honour suitable to the son of a king.

A tale of Conull Gulbuin, the son of the high king of Alt-Eire, going to revenge his father and great grandfather. Upon the seven armies * of the Fingalians, joyful Ossian, son of Fingal, li-

† Companies, bands.

beral hero, of the greatest esteem, give us the tale of Conull Gulbuin, the great, merry, cheerful, warlike, magnanimous hero. The tale to thee I shall recite, Patrick, if thou wilt listen to it; the tale of the affectionate, meek, liberal, valiant Conull, of great fame.

On a day we were in the hall of the Olla *, with our strong, sweet-voiced, heroic army; it was said that there was none to afflict us in the five provinces of Erin. Thus we were until the evening, and victorious words were in the mouths of our youthful heroes, that there was not a combat for one, or a score, or a hundred, of our Fingalians in the five provinces.

A swift ship was seen, fleetly making way on the great ocean towards us, and on board was one great, terrible, manly hero, like a brand of fire. Dreadful was his appearance to the Fingalians; to behold him like a shaking mountain, fierce as on fire, dragging his ship to a haven. Near us, upon a hill, he sat, the courageous, valiant, terrible, tall, dreadful, champion; by his haughty feats, he would frighten the birds in the firmament: a hundred movements he would perform, like a mountain speat in mighty torrents; like the loud noise of thunder resounding against the rocks; or as a stone tumbling down an awful cliff. Above them, his noise was heard, and beholding

* Doctor, a learned man.

him were all the Fingalians. With one heart, all our women fell in deep love with the hardy champion.

Many were the pictures of lions and leopards on the silken vestment of the great hero, in his full armour and attire, with his sharp, furbished, warlike arms. Great, beautiful, and speckled, was his coat of mail; strong, destructive, and hard was his helmet; the cuirass of the handsome hero of curled locks, was gleaming, smooth, variegated, and triumphant; the great terrible man of valour had, for the battle, two spears of the seven points, in his warlike hand, that would not miss the breadth of a hair; a sword, long, broad, and glittering, like sparks of fire coming from the hearth, was upon the side of the great, victorious, courageous, terrible, fierce hero.

His helmet and breast-plate are bright, small spotted, beautiful, and bound by melted silver, with epaulets* of shining† gold. On the left hand of the champion, was a hard shield engraved with many cuts. The sparkling brightness of the valiant hero would give light, though there was no star in the firmament.

The counsel which the Fingalians, and our handsome chief warriors formed, was to send Dermid to ask the tale‡ of the great, fierce, frantic man. Brown-haired Dermid, with salutation

* Clusters. † Flaming. ‡ News.

went, the fairest hero of the most cheerful laugh, meek, steady, generous, and manly, to ask the tale of the brave, mighty hero.

In the words of a bard, Dermid asked, who art thou, and what is thy surname, or what induced thee to land in this place.

I am the son, spake he, of the king of Alt-Eire, Conull Gulbuin, of wounds; victory in every conflict in which I engaged, by the valour of my hand I ever obtained. A ransom for my father and my grandfather from your Fingalians, I must have; and likewise the head of Fingal, and all his family, before I shall ever return.

To destroy the Fingalians thou art not able; but thou shalt have the combat thou choosest, whether it be one, or a score, or a hundred, to-morrow, at the rising of the sun. Five hundred of your Fingalians I must have to-morrow at the dawn of day; I shall scatter them as dust before the wind, in spite of Fingal and his great family. That night, we being all together, was spent in sadness, sorrow, and grief; and on the next day, at sun-rising, five hundred of our Fingalians moved along.

He skirmished like a man without rule, and swifter was he than a fiery meteor in the clouds: the five hundred he dispersed as a raven would scatter an ant-hill. We sent forth other two hundred to meet him, fondly keen of displaying their heroism in the beginning of the fray; and every

one the son of a king, or a chief from the principal heads of our family.

He sallied forth like a man in rage, quicker than the stormy wind: by him our two hundred fell, and not so much as one of them returned.

To us, dismal it was to see him leaping, and, in a fury, performing mighty acts of valour; and after he slaughtered our seven hundred, more nimble he was than a deer on a plain. Oscar was elated with pride, my dearly-beloved, son of great fame; and he went forth in his armour of steel, and all the Fingalians crying aloud, "Victory attend thee."

Toward the hill of battle* the two heroes moved, to try their prowess: as a small skiff by a high wind, so shook the hill by the madness of their conflict; as a hawk bouncing against a covey† of birds, was Oscar going against the hero, performing subtile perverse feats: strong spears were driven like lightning above the heroes. By their feats the glittering of swords was seen; the heath and grass round the hill by them were all set on flames. By Conull's leaping and furious deeds, under his feet the earth yielded; down to the knees, at every leap, in the ground he sunk.

Eight days and five tides, they renewed the rage of battle each day. By the champion, Oscar was wounded in the right breast, at the end of the

* Slaughter. † Flock.

eighth day. At the sight of Oscar bruised, the Fingalians gave a dreadful shout of fear. As the gap of a flood running down from the mountains, was the blood of my son streaming through his wounds.

When Oscar saw that he was wounded, and that the Fingalians were sad and full of sorrow, then it was that he gave the bloody cut, and made the head of Conull bounce over the hill. The second time the Fingalians gave a more triumphant shout, with gladness and great joy, when Conull fell, and the head was thrown from the body at a distance. As many of us as remained of Fingal's heroes, departed together with Oscar, to Fingal's house; and in healing him, five quarters of a year were spent in the house of Fingal, the high king of battles. Young wealthy women all kinds of music and games did play, to restore mirth to my beloved son. Sweeter music to Fingal was what happened, and that Conull wrestled with the valiant Oscar, than although as many more of the fair handsome Fingalians should fall.

Thus to you, Patrick, is told the tale concerning Conull Gulbuinn, and it is truth. All the Fingalians saw him falling, and when they laid him under the stones, they made a lamentation for him.

OSSIAN'S TALE.

It is a woeful tale, O Malvina! Bra-solus this night is sad. Her countenance was like the down* of the hill; her ivory teeth, white as the surges of the ocean. Her sparkling eyes, bright as the stars, cheering the traveller in a gloomy night. Her hair bending as a blossom-tree, when the gentle breeze smiles upon it. Generous, mild, charming, and modest, was her voice: like the chaunts of the bard, when fire-born genius dazzles in his soul. Her face was like a sun-beam, that illuminates the wanderer's soul.

Rulena departed with the rest! alas! alas! her beauty excelled the sun at noon-day. Swift and

* An herb that grows in morasses; it has a white head, of a silky nature.

lofty were her steps. Who could equal Bragela, in wisdom, knowledge, conversation, music, and every art. Thou canst remember, O! Malvina, how excellent was their fame, how luminous their actions; drop a tear to their memory. I weary to follow them. My face is hard as flint, my eye cannot pour forth a tear, my heart is hard as the hollan; it will not melt though the universe should totter.

The cotemporaries of my youth and strength are departed; my renown shall not rise in the song. I am despised by my friends; alas! great is the change of days.

Though the sun glitters upon the heath, I will not behold her golden rays; though the stag should start by me, Ossian will chace him no more. Although Manus should cross the ocean again to invade Albin, my sword is not victorious in the slaughter; and my fame is not celebrated by the bards. I am not invited to a feast. My kiss is scorned by the virgin. My esteem is not equal to a king's son; one day is like a year to me.

It was the reverse in Innis-phail*, also in Selma, the mansions of my mighty father; Ossian

* Innis-phail, Lag-phail, the fatal-stone (and Cloch-na-cineamhuin), or the stone of fortune. Ireland is often, from this stone, by the poets called Innis-phail, from a persuasion, the ancient Irish had, that in what country soever this stone remained, there one of their blood was to reign. But this proved as false as such other prophecies for 300 years, from Edward the First to the reign of James the First in England. The Irish pretend to have memoirs concerning this stone for above 2000

was honoured above the rest; behold the uncertainty of every thing under the sun.

years. What's certain is, that after having long continued at Tarah*, it was, for the purpose mentioned, sent to Fergus, the first actual king of Scots; and that it lay in Argyle (the original seat of the Scots in Britain), till about the year of Christ 842, that Kenneth the Second, the son of Alpin, having enlarged his borders by the conquest of the Picts, transferred this stone, for the same purpose as before, to Scone. The supreme kings of Ireland used to be inaugurated in times of heathenism on the hill of Tarah, and the stone being inclosed in a wooden chair, was thought to emit a sound under the rightful candidate (a thing easily managed by the Druids), but to be mute under a man of none or a bad title; that is, one who was not for the turn of those priests. Every one has read of Memnon's vocal statute in Egypt. This fatal stone was superstitiously sent to confirm the Irish colony in the north of Great Britain, where it continued as the coronation-seat of the Scottish kings, even since christianity; till, in the year 1300, Edward the First of England brought it from Scone, placing it under the coronation-chair at Westminster, and there it still continues, the ancientest respected monument in the world; for though some others may be more ancient as to duration, yet thus superstitiously regarded, they are not. It is now called by the vulgar, Jacob-stone, as this had been Jacob's pillow at Bethel†.

* Teamhair, Tarah, Teamhra, Taragh, Temora; the ancient proper name is Teamhra.

† Gen. xxviii. 11, 18, 19. See Mr. Huddleston's *Edition of Scotland's History of the Druids*, pp. 150, 151, 152.

OSSIAN'S DISTRESS.

A
POEM.

The Argument:

In this allegory is introduced the spirit or ghost of Ossian, speaking in a colloquy with the composer of it, and lamenting that his enemies are become numerous; also blessing the heroes who defended his cause. The person who composed the poem encourages him. Ossian is blessing all his friends.

BELOVED Ossian, of many tales, from thy graceful mouth sweet is every song; when, O king of bards, thou commencest the sublime rehearsal of heroes and swords, thy substantial words are like the dew upon the green, tender herbs of the great plains, which give joy to my solitary soul, full of sorrow and love. Tell me, sorrowful Ossian, what is it that now wounds thy heart, what is the

cause of thy lament, thy cry in the island? The occasion of my mourning I shall not conceal, stranger from afar, who now awakest me; but hard and sorrowful is my tale, that shall make tears flow in streams from thine eyes.

A thousand years, and some hundreds more have passed, since my path hath ceased in the desert, since my mouth hath desisted in the song, to celebrate the sons of the field of battle.

Many were the darts of grief that pierced my heart in the bloody path, after the Fingalians were gone; when I travelled solitary and feeble, without a son, without a chief, without the light of the sun. When the beloved companions of my youth, and my strength, were all gone and had forsaken me, some of them vanquished in the field, and some lamenting in the fierce storm. Miserable and sad I was left behind, naked as a withered tree, without fruit, blossom, or leaves, on the summit of the high mountain of storms. And after I was many years solitary and alone, the whistling blast of the mountain came with strength to me, and I died; but my fame remained in the song, and I myself dwell in the island of the brave*, enjoying the music of my friends, without want, without conflict†, without battle.

But descending, as at this time, from above to

* The heaven of the ancient Caledonians. *Flallh-innis*, or *flaitheas*, is to this day a term for heaven.

† Combat.

the dwellings of my fore-fathers of old, I am in a dilemma, lamenting and mourning, such as Gaul in Ifreoine*. The foes of the Fingalians are become numerous, and are secretly destroying my fame, and with guile and envy are virulently bent on neglecting my tale as a thing of nought.

One of them, like a bear, is striding before the rest, with fierce rage and bristly fury; and to wound me keen if he had arrows in his quiver. His head is bowed, heavy and grey, and trembling with the pain of age; his watery eyes are awry, and he is widely opening his wide voracious mouth. His legs are infirm, and stooping under the weight of his uncouth body; and his neck, though great is its bulk, bending under the burden of his head. Behind him there is another man marching, without clemency, sense, breeding, or shame, like a wolf in the glen, running fast to murder the young brood. Rage and fury are rising up behind the ears of the real dog, opening his babbling, gaping, hard teeth, to tear my armies to pieces before he shall stop. Behind these two great men, their armies are quickly coming on,

* The hell of the ancient Druids and Caledonians. Whatever it was, it is described as singularly cold, and remarkable for the cruelty of its inhabitants. It appears that Gaul was confined in this island amongst his merciless foes, where he repeated the following verse:—"Thou wild land of the Freoine, with thick mist and monsters, land of torment, without honour, without friendship, to approach thee is disgusting to me." Glenfreoin, in Dumbartonshire, signifies cold valley.

to dishonour the fame of the bards, and wholly to cut off the Fingalians.

Inhuman tribe, without mercy, without virtue, without friendship; race without love, without compassion, without victory. Is there any praise or valour in murdering the dead, when there is none of them to oppose you in the combat? Were the Fingalians, as in the years that are past, drawing near to you on the sloping heath, quickly would you flee away from their fierce strokes, in time of ire. Conan, the least of the Fingalians, would be sufficient to reduce your two leaders into subjection; both the open-mouthed, disfigured bear, and the long-eared dog that supports him.

But pity it is, O hero, that thou hast clothed me in the filthy garb of the strangers, and that thou hadst not given sufficient proof to my foes, that my own garb was not lost.

In the north a man started up to preserve my people alive, and wrote the history of our fame anew in mild words, not deviating from the truth. But blessing attend the souls of the heroes, who, with indignation and ire, are coming down to defend me and the Fingalians from the desire of our merciless foes. Though this day my garment is old and torn from side to side, its shape is not yet aukward, and it proves my strength and fame.

Thus, heroic friend, prove thyself Fingal's

heir; tell my tale, as it was, in ancient times, recited in a mild style. From the east came down, with easy steps, an historian of elegant voice. From his lips, noble as the dew, and as fresh virgin-honey dropping from the comb; his style is flowing, methodical, wise, and neat: melodious is his speech with beauty and elegance. In his countenance appears the bard, descending with slow and gentle step. Another rose up in the south, who strenuously pled my cause in the battle, and who clothed me in my own garb, at the time of reciting the tale of the brave. A brave hero in Lismore prepared his arms; he threw the spear, and made a gap in the head of the filthy bear, without virtue. A dauntless clerk stood up in the high fort (Edinburgh), in the cause of the bards against the wolf; he threw the real dog upon his back, and the back of his head in the mire. Another strenuous champion is coming fresh; strong is his step, and mild his voice, and he shall overthrow all those who have calumniated my people.

And now, since the two great men are fallen, their armies are pursued in their flight, and they shall never obtain the victory in the battle, nor merit praise in the strife.

My blessing on the souls of the heroes, who with ire are descending, to defend me and the Fingalians, from the will of our merciless foes. O Ossian, of victorious deeds, my blessing attend thee, and all thy people together; pleasant to my

sorrowful heart is every distressful tale that comes from thy mouth; although thy enemies are become many, for them it is vain to struggle; victory shall never bless a society without love, and without good luck. From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, the valiant heroes are coming forth, to clothe the Fingalians in their proper dress.

Return thou to thy rest, lovely Ossian, and weep no more for those who are gone; as long as the sun and moon shall remain, they shall not be numbered among the dead; and until all things under the sun shall change, gentle bard of many tales, thy power and thy fame shall not fail, and the remembrance of thee shall not be cut off from among the people.

OINA-MORUL.

The Argument.

Mal-orchol, on account of some family feuds, refusing to give his daughter in marriage to Ton-Thormod, the latter, in revenge, lays waste his lands. Fingal sends Ossian to the assistance of Mal-orchol, who offers him his daughter, but she discovering a prior attachment to Ton-Thormod, he generously surrenders her to that chief, and brings about a reconciliation between him and the father. The poem begins with an address to Malvina.

As over Larmon's lofty hills of grass,
In Spring, bright gleams of genial sun-shine pass;
Successive thus, inspiring warlike lays,
Beam on my soul the tales of other days.
When other bards, forgetful of the strain,
With harps unstrung, the heady goblet drain;
While stretch'd supine, they sleep at ease prolong;
Oft comes a voice that bids me raise the song.

It is the sacred voice of ages gone,
Recalling chiefs who mighty deeds have done;
By their heroic actions set on fire,
I start from rest, and strike my sounding lyre.
I strike—nor are its notes a troubled stream,
They calm the soul, like fair Malvina's theme,
When her white hand awakes the quiv'ring string,
And Lutha's rugged rocks responsive ring;
Ah! Toscar's lovely heir. Thou only ray
That cheers my clouded soul, deprived of day
Fair solace of afflicted age, draw near,
And to a deed that honours youth, give ear.
What time Fingal, in Morven, held the sway,
Long ere, by years, these locks were turn'd to
gray;

Before the wind, I plough'd the wave of night,
Observing as I steer'd Concalthin's light.
For wild Fuarfed flew the winged ship,
A woody land surrounded by the deep.
There then the generous Mal-orchol reign'd,
That formerly Fingal had entertain'd!
Who mindful of the favour, when inform'd
That round his friend the rage of battle storm'd,
Commanded Ossian, with a chosen train,
To join the monarch, and his cause maintain.

Arrived my ship, in Co-coiled I moor'd,
And by a special herald, sent my sword.
The king received, and brighten'd at the view,
For this the sign of Albion's aid he knew;

Nor was it long before I met the chief,
Who grasp'd my hand, and spoke these words in
grief.

You call, brave warriors, on a man o'ercome,
When foes beleager his deserted dome.
Ton-thormod, in Sar-dronlo, holds his reign,
A land like this, encompass'd by the main,
Whose warlike natives long employed our arms;
Till by my daughter, Oina-Morul's charms,
Their leader smit; he sought her for a bride:
But hating the connection, I denied.
At this enraged, his fury nought can stand,
With fire and sword he ravages the land:
You only come to witness our o'erthrow,
And see these towr's invested by the foe.

Fear not, said I, for Morven's sons are bold;
Like boys they come, not battles to behold.
Though from this isle our country lies remote,
The king of Selma has not yet forgot,
When by a tempest forc'd upon your shores,
You led him friendly to these regal tow'rs:
Nor did a gloomy cloud thy face appear,
Thy board regal'd, thy music charm'd his ear.
The favour to requite, he bade us sail,
And in thy cause to perish or prevail.

Undaunted chief of Trenmor's noble line,
Thy words are like Cruth-loda's voice divine.

Who dwells in clouds above the starry sky,
And gives a calm, or bids the tempest fly.
Besides the son of Comhal, many guests
Have in the hall partook Mal-orchol's feasts:
Yet they desert him when the clanging sound
Of war approaches, and his foes surround.
To all the winds that sweep the hoary main,
A sail to spy oft have I look'd in vain.
One, only one, of all my numerous friends,
Affords assistance when the storm impends.
Thrice welcome then, come enter these our tow'r's,
Whatever they afford is freely your's;
Here, while the shady night extends her reign,
Attend to Oina-Morul's pleasing strain.
The spacious dome, with plenty stor'd, we found;
The voice of harmony, the banquet crown'd:
A num'rous choir compos'd the monarch's band;
Upon the harp arose his daughter's hand;
And while with skill her fingers swept the strings,
Her own sad tale the plaintive virgin sings.
In silence I observ'd the beauteous fair:
In graceful ringlets fell her shining hair.
Her eyes in tears, that but increas'd their pow'r,
Shone like two stars, seen through an April show'r:
The sailor marks them as he ploughs the seas,
And blesses to himself the heavenly rays.
No sooner morn had streak'd the sky with red,
Than my companions towards the foe I led:
Where rapid Tormul's trembling waters roar,
We found them posted on the rocky shore.

To the loud sound of tall Ton-thormod's shield,
They swift advanc'd to meet us in the field.
Our's not averse—a combat fierce began;
Chief clos'd with chief, and man encounter'd man:
Ton-thormod met me in the mingled shock;
Wide flew his steel, upon my helmet broke.
The chief o'ercome, I bound in leather bands,
And pris'ner gave him to Mal-orchol's hands.
The conflict o'er, the king with rapture view'd,
The prince a captive, and his host subdu'd.
Again, at eve we shar'd the monarch's feast;
Among the rest Ton-thormod sat, a guest:
But mournful sat, revolving his defeat,
Nor durst the eye of Oina-Morul meet.
The shell went round, till nature call'd for rest,
When in his own my hand the monarch press'd;
Then kind began—Son of renown'd Fingal,
Thou shalt not unrequited leave my hall.
One child is mine, the loveliest of her kind,
In person faultless, and complete in mind.
Espouse the fair; she will thy soul delight,
And shine in Selma, a distinguished light:
Nor will the portion she can bring disgrace
Her union with the great Fingalian race.
Thus friendly he then left me to repose;
But scarce laid down, my eyes began to close,
Than sweetly breathing through the silent air,
The sudden sound of music charm'd my ear.
Soft as the breeze that whirls the thistle's beard,
And lowly whispering in the grass, is heard:

The royal maid of Fuarfed it prov'd,
Who knew my soul by harmony was mov'd,
And plaintive sung!—Who plac'd on yonder rock
O'er rolling ocean casts a parting look.
Upon the blast his hair disshevell'd flies;
His bosom heaves, with sorrow streams his eyes.
Retire, disconsolate youth, thy love is gone
To wander in a distant land unknown;
Though fame extols that race of kings yet true,
To her first love, she'll ever think of you;
And doom'd in misery her days to end,
Shall curse the fate that made our sires contend.

Sweet voice, I said, forbear thy plaintive moan,
Thou shalt not wander in a land unknown.
Descended from the daring Trenmor's race,
This bosom cherishes no passion base;
It scorns to act a low ignoble part:
And knowing now to whom inclines thy heart,
Thy sire to mollify shall be my care;
Then ease thy fears and back to rest repair.

At break of day the captive prince I sought,
And to the presence of Mal-orchol brought;
Whom I address'd! Why treat a youth with scorn:
Of worth, of bravery, and nobly born,
For fame, not hatred, your forefathers fought;
Their rivalship, in arms, should be forgot,
Since now the chiefs, in Odin's hall above,
The happy seat of harmony and love;

Immers'd in joys, with ancient heroes dwell,
And friendly stretch their hands to give the shell.
Like them be reconcil'd, forgive past rage,
And shun the vices of a barb'rous age.

My words had weight; the lovers cause prevail'd;
I join'd their hands, the king their union seal'd.
Malvina thus, before these silver hairs
Were whiten'd by the length of passing years,
I could a princess, in beauty's charms,
Forego, and yield her to a rival's arms.
A generous deed with pleasure fills the mind,
And well recorded, benefits mankind.

DARTHULA.

HOW dear ! how lovely yonder eastern shore ;
And Albion's lakes embanked with woodlands green :
From these retreats my feet would stray no more,
But with my love I quit the darling scene,

The Isle of Drayno, grac'd with verdant bowr's,
The forts that tops yon cliff's o'er hanging brow ;
The Sunian wall, and Fingal's mossy tow'rs,
Wake in my breast affection's parting glow.

I with my Nathos bid yon wilds adieu !
The woods and bays where Anlo roam'd of yore,
Now fast receding, vanish from my view,
And Albion's pleasing scenes return no more.

How sweet thy landscapes, Letha's winding vale !
How soft repose where thy smooth riv'lets glide !
Oft on thy heights we took the fresh regale,
And hills and streams the plenteous board supply'd.

O lov'd Glenmasan! waste of herbs and flowers!
Fair wave thy forests in the vernal breeze;
Full many a day we pass'd the unconscious hours,
Stretch'd on thy grassy banks in careless ease.

Dear Etha's glen, where first my cot was rear'd!
How much I lov'd on thy tall groves to gaze;
When rising o'er the vale, the sun appear'd,
And the lake glitter'd with his morning rays!

Glenurcha's simple tract, the tract belov'd,
By two straight ranks of beauteous hills confin'd;
How glad his youthful mates with Nathos mov'd,
While o'er thy crags they urg'd the flying hind!

Darthula's vale, the vale of harmless glee,
Where social bands around us lov'd to throng;
Where oft from yonder mountain's bending tree
The artless cuckoo pour'd her mellow song!

How lovely Drayno, with its sounding shore,
The sands of Avich lav'd by billows green!
From these sweet haunts my feet would stray no more,
But with my love, I quit the darling scene.

THE
SOCIETY OF TRUE HIGHLANDERS:
A METRICAL EFFUSION.

IN lov'd *Wilhelmia* *, near whose mural pile,
Proud *Lochy's* tides with eddying surges boil,
Where *Caledonia's* regal grandeur shone,
When old *Achæus* sway'd the *Scotian* throne,
Conven'd the mountain-patriot's faithful band,
And pledg'd th' endearing tie with heart and hand ;
A tie that calls to mind primæval days,
And rites of sires that won immortal praise.
Chiefs, sprung from kings, in friendship's league combine,
Leaders and heads of many a glorious line ;
The first in state, in worth, in cultur'd mind,
For peace, for war, in court and camp refin'd,

* *Wilhelmia*, or *Gulielmia*, *Fortwilliam* in *Inverness-shire*, where the society of *True Highlanders* was formed by *Colonel Macdonell* of *Glen-garry*, chief of the *Clan-donnell*, *XVIIth Mac-Mhic-Alastair*, and *Ceann-Suidhe*, or preses of the meeting.

Whose hearts are ardent for their country's good,
 Whose veins are warm'd with Scotia's purest blood,
 Their aim to guard the genuine Gàèl's † claims:
 A grateful country joys to hail their names.

Survey, my muse, the vast assembled train,
 Now crowding all Gordonia's spacious plain;
 As clouds along the hills, they glide in streams,
 While swords and gorgets shoot reflective gleams!
 Each chief, in front, high tow'ring, seems afar,
 Pelides, Fingal, or the god of war!
 Those are the Gàèls still unconquered race,
 They wear their native arms with native grace,
 Milesian arms, Milesia's rich costume,
 The garb of Gauls that sack'd imperial Rome;
 Themes that would bid the strain spontaneous roll,
 If heav'n-born genius fir'd the poet's soul.

The graceful bonnet freak'd with various dyes,
 O'er whose high crown the shadowy plumes arise,
 Forms the rich crest, and, as the warriors move,
 Th' effusive clusters seem a floating grove!
 The parti-colour'd plaid, a splendid show,
 Bestrides the breast, like Æther's lovely bow
 On western clouds, when Sol the day renews,
 And ev'ry field is gemm'd with twinkling dews.
 Encas'd within the silver-spangled sheath,
 Hangs from its zone the pond'rous beam of death:
 Thus sleeps the thunder-dragon † of the skies,
 Till storms in all their warring rage arise.
 Before the Phelig's ‡ finely plaited coil,
 Conspicuous waves the grossy badger's spoil,

* Gàèl must be pronounced as a dissyllable.

† Beithir dhealain.—Vid. Gael. Effus.,

‡ Féileadh Beag, or the hilt.

Whence plenty dealt, without the frown's alloy,
 Can turn the wail of grief to songs of joy.
 Beneath the knee whose beauty mates the snow,
 The well-wrought tassel binds the gaudy hoe,
 Where red and white with rival lustre blend,
 And round the calf at equal angles bend.
 Last, glancing as the polish'd jet, the shoe
 Adorns the foot that scarce imprints the dew.
 The Gàël, thus equipt in full array,
 Meet with one soul, on friendship's festal day.

Anon! the bag-pipe pours its stream of tones,
 Swell'd by the peal of the silk-ruffling drones;
 With all the flight of quiv'ring fingers driv'n,
 The torrent floats on the four winds of heav'n:
 Rais'd by the quick or solemn marching time,
 On music's wing the soul ascends sublime;
 Full of the deeds that beam through years of old,
 Our clans advance, in might and freedom bold:
 The muse, enraptur'd at the bright survey,
 Bids their lov'd names adorn th' unprompted lay.

With flags display'd, *Clann-Domhnuill's* regal line,
 And *Stewart's* ranks with martial beauty shine:
 The *Cam'rons* there, behind their gallant sire,
 Hard as the flint, and fierce as flames of fire;
MacLachlans, murd'rous in the van of fight;
Macleods, exulting in their native might;
Macleans, whose swords could deal the fateful storm,
 When Mars and rage the battling hosts deform;
 Victorious *Grants*, the sons of chiefs renown'd,
 From where Spey's current laves the flow'ry ground;
Mackenzies, that wide waste the leaguer'd vale,
 When the stag's branching antlers mount the gale;
Mackinnon's champions join'd with black *Macrae's*,
 Whose bright exploits in glory's annals blaze;

Macgregors tribes with arms and prowess steel'd,
 In furious combats never known to yield;
 The hardy * sons of *Diarmad* fam'd of yore,
 (The chief who fell'd Glenshee's destructive boar);
 The *Frasers*, awful as the lightning blast,
 With heaps of slaughter'd foes to strew the waste;
Chisholm, from northern glens, with marshall'd pow'rs,
 And brave *M'Colls*, from Appin's sylvan bow'rs;
 With the strong ranks that bear the *leader's* name
 Who gain'd, in Malcolm's days, immortal fame †.

Before the pomp, advanc'd, with kingly grace,
 I see the *stem* of Conn's victorious race,
 Whose sires of old the western sceptre sway'd
 Which all the isles and Albion's half obey'd,
 Th' illustrious *chief* of Garry's woody vales:
 His radiant standard eddying sweeps the gales,
 Conspicuous blazon'd with *Clann-Domhnill's* shield,
 That rears Fame's emblems on its quarter'd field,
 The barge with furling sails, the gory hand,
 The flying eagle, and the croslet wand;
 Two bears, the types of vanquish'd Lochlin's shame,
 With shafts infixt, support the mystic frame:
 Its crest, the tow'ring rock in blue pourtray'd,
 And the perch'd raven ting'd with sable shade.

* The Campbell's. The bear of Glenshee forms one of the heroic emblems in the standard.

† The Macintoshes. The progenitor of this valiant clan was Shaw, who obtained an extensive property in Murray, for his active services in suppressing a rebellion that had broken out in that county. He was a son of Duncan, thane of Fife, and flourished in the reign of Malcolm IV. about the middle of the twelfth century. Toiscach signifies general.

The order'd hosts processive march along
With steps accordant to the war-pipe's song;
The spacious hall, its portals wide display'd,
And its long course in festive wreaths array'd,
Receive the prime in rank. The thronging bands,
With friendly hearts, conjoin fraternal hands;
Clann-Dòmhnuille's puissant chief o'er all presides;
His active zeal the council forms and guides;
They pledge adherence to the patriot laws
That knit true Gàèls to their country's cause,
The social rite that marks th' attachment strong,
The dress, the music, and the native song,
The sprightly dance, the field or mountain game,
That string the limbs, and fit for deeds of fame,
That prompt the Gàèl, like a fiery zone,
To link as guardians of the British throne,
As British freedom, loyal, firm, and bold,
That never barter'd faith, for proffer'd gold,
Through life unstain'd to hold the Gaelic name,
And dread no form of death like guilty shame.

No deed of shame the genuine Gàèl stains,
No taint of pois'ning guile pervades their veins;
On virtue's beauty fixing all the soul,
As the free magnet eyes the steady pole,
They know how order guards the public weal,
Respect each rank that forms the social scale,
With duteous faith obey the legal rein,
But nobly spurn the slave's coercive chain;
Smile fearless in the gory walks of death,
Nor yield their freedom, till they yield their breath.
Instinctive touch'd with feeling's finest glow,
They shed refreshing balm on wounds of woe:
Thus, ev'ning slakes the world with pearly rains,
When the sun flames on ocean's western plains.

On wanton foes whose madness prompts their ire,
They rush like streams of heav'n's electric fire,
When rolling thunders burst in awful peals,
And nature, tott'ring, to her centre reels!

Facts crowding thick on facts, confirm my strain;
From crops matur'd we judge the parent grain
The tree whose arms with luscious apples glow,
Supplies no sap for the lean aspen bough;
The lion, mightiest of the sylvan kind,
Breeds not the feeble kid or tim'rous hind;
Nor the shrunk nag that draws the sledge car
Can procreate the high-bounding steed of war.

Through ages past explore the rolls of fame,
No speck has soil'd the genuine Gàèl's name:
With one rich juice from one nectareous vine,
Through ev'ry age the gen'rous clusters shine.
These are the sons of Fingal, Caelt*, and Gaul,
Whose glorious prowess made earth's tyrants fall,
The great Cuchullin, Oscar prince of shields,
And Conn victorious in a hundred fields.
Names that shall grace the poet's tuneful rhyme,
While sun and stars revolving, measure time.

Th' Ausonian pow'rs, of their vast conquests vain,
Had stretch'd their sway o'er Albion's southern plain;
But northern freedom cry'd:—"My sons! combine;
Dread not yon foe; the land of hills is mine."
The hill-born heroes freedom's flag unfurl'd,
And check'd Rome's progress in the western world.
No fear the Gàèl's dauntless soul can tame;
Not fraud but prowess gains him deathless fame,

* Caoilte. The word in the text is a monosyllbale.

He fights or falls in native freedom brave,
And scorns to live on terms that bind the slave.

O'er Mili's gallant sons t' usurp the rein,
Proud Scandinavia try'd, but try'd in vain.
On Albion shores she won sepulchral grounds:
This right is fixt, till the last trumpet sounds.

All Europe, from Iberia's wave-beat coast,
Through her wide realms, to Zembla's world of frost,
In praise of Scotia's mountain race conjoins,
How in fame's fields their peerless valour shines.
From the green bow'rs where first young Sol awakes,
To woods that hide him from Columbian lakes,
Renown's acclaims in answ'ring echoes roll,
And circle the vast sphere from pole to pole.

Napoleon led his firm embattl'd train
Where sev'n-stream'd Nilus soaks the Libyan plain;
Before him shone Britannia's pride display'd,
And thus, predictive of war's fate, he said:
"Those are the tribes of Albion's northern hills,
Th' extended realms of earth their glory fills:
Be strong, my warriors! ere the close of day,
Yon parti-colour'd lines, so grimly gay,
May teach what force the soul of Oscar steel'd,
And how great Fingal's arm could waste the field."
Truth seal'd his speech. The champaign blaz'd around;
The nations mix'd, red slaughter stain'd the ground;
Th' unconquer'd host a conquest soon became,
And fall'n or fled, resign'd an empty name.

The plain of Waterloo's decisive fray,
Attests the Gàël's fall exerted sway.

Squares rang'd by squares, in mail-cas'd myriads, stood,
 The spoilers of the world, athirst for blood.
 War's columns now advanc'd in silent state,
 Majestic, awful, big with Europe's fate!
 Britannia's lion roar'd :—" My cubs, away !
 Spring on yon wolves, and glut your maws with prey !"
 Then! then did death's tremendous engines yell,
 Disgorging sulph'rous bolts like mouths of hell !
 Swords clash'd, steel rattled, murder march'd before,
 And strew'd the scene with corpses bath'd in gore !
 When Morven's plaided sons, in vengeful ire,
 Roll'd on the steely wall the flood of fire,
 It broke, as melts a mass of dusky haze,
 When, Sol, in Cancer, darts the noontide blaze!
 For this, the valiant Gàèl shine renown'd,
 With glory's never-fading laurels crown'd ;
 Now rais'd aloft, Old Caledonia's name,
 With lasting beams shall gild the sphere of fame.

Hail, chiefs and patriots now combin'd to save
 Our ancient rites from time's all-swallowing grave !
 While you protect the sea-girt queen of isles,
 She stands secure of force and fraudulent wiles.
 The Gàèl's freedom fenc'd by sacred laws
 Now joins his own with his dear country's cause :
 The Gaelic, sham'd and fetter'd now no more,
 Resumes full empire on her fav'rite shore ;
 From shades of night again triumphant rais'd,
 She mounts her throne with orient gems emblaz'd.
 His head the genius of Old Morven rears
 From the long slumber of two thousand years ;
 Now rais'd, a stream of mist, above the vales,
 Onward he moves, upborne by western gales ;
 He tow'rs from hill to hill at ev'ry stride ;
 The stately forms of Selma round him glide :

In their blue hall, they pledge the meteor-shell,
 And bid the harp's ærial music swell;
 "Our sons" they sing, "with glory's thirst on flame,
 Tread in our steps, and share our deathless fame."
 Bennévis, chief of Albion's dusky hills,
 Assents, hoarse murm'ring from his snow-fed rills;
 O'er the tall ranks of bright'ning peaks below,
 He seems with joy to lift his aged brow.

Auspicious æra, hail! The pow'r of love
 Descending from the blissful thrones above,
 With the fair choir of virtues, hand in hand,
 Shall fix their reign in Albion's favour'd land.
 Discord, and fell oppression, head-long thrown,
 On hell's red rocks with tortur'd fiends shall groan:
 The spring of heav'n shall now with fost'ring gales,
 Make our hills green, and fertilize our vales,
 Youths, herds, and flocks, unnumber'd swarm around,
 Thick as the ferns that skirt the sylvan bound,
 Arts, tillage, commerce, rear a patriot train,
 To wield the sword, or plow the spacious main;
 While christian truth, and classic learning join'd,
 Unfolding all the boundless realms of mind,
 Shall bid th' immortal part sublimely rise,
 Assert its native worth, and gain the skies.
 Refining *love* shall thus his warmth diffuse,
 Peace, grace, and bliss distil empyreal dews,
 And the great age, in rolls of fate foretold,
 Beam on our happy isle with rays of gold.

THOU at whose potent word primæval light
 Flash'd through Chaotic glooms, and scatter'd night,
 When, orb in orb, the spheres began to move,
 And loud hosannahs fill'd the tracts above!
 Sov'reign of heav'n and earth! vouchsafe to smile
 With choice regard on freedom's western isle!

May the great fabric of her threefold sway
Endure, till earth and seas and skies decay !
Preserve our prince, the realm's illustrious heir ;
His life, his throne, be thy perpetual care !
Preserve our state from faction's rending jars ;
Preserve the hosts that bravely fight our wars ;
Preserve the native rights that form our boast,
Preserve the Oaken Mound that walls our coast :
May British majesty unrivall'd shine
While Phœbe's force attracts the surging brine,
And ev'ry flag on ocean's breast unfurl'd
Revere the mistress of the wat'ry world.

The preceding poem was composed by Mr. Ewen M'Lachlan, to whom the Editors have, in a former part of this work, acknowledged their high obligations. The poem was recited with enthusiastic admiration at the meeting of true Highlanders, held at Inverlochic, on the 12th July last, and is inserted in this work by the author's permission.

COPY OF A LETTER

From the learned and accomplished Ewen M'Lachlan, Esq. Rector of the Grammar School, Old Aberdeen, to one of the Editors, with his permission to publish the same.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ The contents of the manuscript which you design to lay before the public, I have perused with considerable pleasure. The poems in your collection are genuine and beautiful Gaelic. The skilful critic may probably detect some instances of monastic interpolation: but this circumstance cannot invalidate the claims of your volume to public patronage. The purity of style, and sublimity of sentiment, predominating through the bulk of these compositions, indicate in their author, in whatever age he flourished, a mind of no ordinary standard.

“ Sceptics may feel a disposition to cavil; but your allegations are accompanied by their proper vouchers, and your veracity will therefore stand unimpeached. In having wrought into the texture of your preface, the leading arguments of the Ossianic controversy, and stating the facts

from which they derive stability, every reader of a candid mind will approve of your judgment. If the accumulation of facts advanced in this, as well as in anterior publications, may not lead to a direct conclusion in favour of the subject, they will at least amount to a high degree of presumption, which is all that ought to be required, at our remote distance from the primary source of information. If the works of Ossian are a forgery, we have sufficient grounds to believe that the imposition cannot be charged on modern times. Antiquity has ascribed the contents of your work to Ossian, as far as we can rely on the faith of Celtic manuscripts, and on traditions which we have imbibed with our maternal milk, and whose impression on our minds will be as permanent as our existence; though we should not quarrel with any of our southern neighbours, on whom the facts adduced by the advocates of the cause, may not have operated with the force of conclusive evidence. With best wishes for the success of your Ossianic collection, I remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Yours, very sincerely,

“ EWEN M'LACHLAN,

“ Rector of the grammar school.

“ *Old Aberdeen,* }
February 14, 1816. }

“ To Hugh M'Callum, Esq.”

NAMES

*Of the Persons who favoured the Editors with the
different Poems inserted in this Work.*

1. *Dargo, the Son of Druidin**, obtained from Duncan Mathison, parish of Snizort, Isle of Skye. The Reverend Malcolm M'Leod, minister.

2. *Crom-Glen*, from Hector M'Phail, parish of Torosay, Isle of Mull. The Reverend Alexander Frazer, minister.

3. *Evir-Aluin*, from the papers of Mr. Donald M'Innes, schoolmaster, Griban, Isle of Mull, parish of Kilninian. The Reverend ——— M'Arthur, minister.

4. *The Fingalians' Great Distress*, from the papers of the Reverend Donald M'Donald, D. D. of Killean; also, another version from Malcolm M'Callum in said parish; another from Duncan M'Intyre, Glen-lyon, Perthshire, and one from Archibald M'Pherson, Assint. Dr. M'Donald thought proper, that this poem should be inserted in this work, although formerly published by Mr. Gillies. The Dr. announces that the poem before us is of a decided preference to that published by Mr. Gillies.

* Mr. John Thomson, late of Craigroy, obtained another edition of the same poem from the papers of Mr. M'Neill of Kilmoluag, seventy years ago, both in the parish of Killean, Kintyre; and we can prove that Archibald Thomson, Esq. Engineer, London, saw it in Mr. J. Thomson's possession.

5. *The Banners of the Fingalians*, from Mr. D. M'Innes's papers, already quoted.

6. *Cuchullin in his Chariot*, from Alexander M'Donald, South Uist. The Reverend George Munro, minister.

7. *The Heads*, from Archibald M'Callum, late of Auchaglass, and from Malcolm M'Callum, both in the parish of Killeen; also from D. M'Intyre, and A. M'Pherson, already quoted.

8. *The Black Dog*, from Dr. M'Donald's papers, from A. M'Callum, of Auchaglass, already quoted, from Niel Fletcher, farmer, Scalestle-beg, Isle of Mull, and from Niel M'Queen, Freeport, Isle of Islay. The Reverend James M'Intosh, minister.

9. *Fingal's Panegyric on Gaul, Colguil, and Trathal*, from the papers of Mr. J. M'Intyre, Arichastle, Glenorchy. The Reverend Joseph M'Intyre, D. D. minister; and from the papers of Mr. D. M'Innes, already quoted.

10. *Fingal's Address to Oscar*, from Mr. M'Nicol, sen. Arichastle, Glenorchy, aged ninety-five years, who could repeat the same when twelve years old, and from Mr. D. M'Innes's papers, already quoted.

11. *The Death of Oscar*, from Mr. D. M'Innes's papers, already quoted.

12. *The Virgin, or Nymph*, from Dr. M'Donald's papers, already quoted, and from William Cameron, High Bridge, by Fortwilliam, parish of Kilmonivaig. The Reverend Thomas Ross, minister.

13. *Conlaoch*, from Mr. D. M'Innes's papers, and from Niel M'Queen, both already quoted.

14. *Ciuhach*, from George M'Kenzie, Gruinart,

parish of Lochbroom. The Reverend Thomas Ross, L. L. D. minister.

15. 16. *Ossian's Addresses to the Rising and Setting Sun*, from Mr. J. M'Intyre's papers, already quoted.

17. *Ossian's Addresses to the Rising and Setting Sun*, translated into Latin, by Ewen M'Lachlan, Esq. Rector, Old Aberdeen.

18. *Morglan and Min-Onn*, from the papers of Mr. J. M'Intyre, already quoted.

19. *The Death of Dermid*, from Dr. M'Donald, already quoted.

20. *The Combat of Fingal and Garv*, from John M'Larty, late of Arinanuan, parish of Killeen. The Reverend D. M'Donald, D. D. minister.

21. *The Fingalians' Greatest Hunting*, from the papers of Dr. M'Donald, and from Archibald M'Callum, late of Auchaglass, both already quoted.

22. *Conull Gulbuin*, from Archibald M'Pherson, Assint, already quoted.

23. *Ossian's Tale*, from the Reverend Alexander Irvine, D. D. Little Dunkeld, and from John M'Larty, Arinanuan, already quoted.

24. *Ossian's Distress*, from the *Inverness Journal*.

25. *Oina-Morul*, from the writings of the Reverend A. M'Donald, late of Liverpool.

26. *The Society of True Highlanders*, composed by Mr. M'Lachlan, of Old Aberdeen.

✍ The Editors are much indebted to the writings of the learned, pious, and Reverend A. M'Donald, late of Liverpool, for much of what is inserted the preface to this work.

THE
LIFE OF
ST. COLUMBA.

THE life of St. Columba*, the apostle of the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, and the founder and first abbot of the famous cathedral of Iona. His genealogy runs thus: He was son of Felim, son of Fergus, son of Conall, son of Niel, of the nine hostages, son of Eochaidh, son of Murdoch, son of Cairbre, son of Cormac, son of Airt, son of Conn, of hundred battles, son of Herimon, son of Mili, of Spain. His life was written by two of his successors, Cummin and Adomnan. The former of these wrote about sixty, and the latter about eighty-three years after the death of the saint; so that they had very good opportunity of coming at the knowledge of every part of his life and character. But unhappily, it seems not to have been the object of

* The venerable Bede, Camden, and some others, call him Columbanus. In the language of the country, he is called Colum-cille (or Colum of the Cells), from his having founded so many churches. The addition of Cille, seems to have been early made to his original name Colum. Another eminent Irish saint of the name of Columbanus, who flourished about the same period, is often confounded with St Columba.

these good men to delineate the real life and character of the saint, but to give a marvellous detail of visions, prophecies, and miracles, which they boldly ascribe to him. It is but candid to suppose that they, themselves, believed what they wrote, and that their writings may have been of use in those ages of credulity and fable; although, in our more enlightened times, they rather disgust than edify in that antiquated form. It is, therefore, necessary, if we would peruse the life of this great and holy man with patience and with profit, to strip it of that marvellous garb with which it has been so long invested; to separate the fact from the fable, and to shew the saint in his real character. Before we comment on this subject, it is necessary to give some explanation regarding I, or Iona.

The Druids are said to have had a college in I before the time of St. Columba; and tradition still points out their burying ground by the name of *Cloadh-nan-Druidhnach*. The ancient name of Iona was I, Hi, or Aoi, as written in the annals of Ulster, which were Latinized into Hyona, or Iona. The common name of it now is I.colm-kill, the isle of Colum of the Cells, included in one of the parishes of the island of Mull. Its venerable ruins still command respect; and the popular belief, founded upon a prophetic distich ascribed to St. Columba is, that they may yet recover their ancient splendour.

An I mo chridhe, I mo ghraidh,
An aite guth Manaich bidh geum ba;
Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crìoch :
Bithidh I mar a bha.

O sacred dome, and my beloved abode !
Whose walls now echo to the praise of God;
The time shall come when lauding monks shall cease,
And howling herds here occupy their place !
But better ages shall hereafter come,
And praise re-echo in this sacred dome.

The first part of the prophecy was literally fulfilled for ages,

till the late noble proprietor, the Duke of Argyle, caused the ground to be enclosed with a sufficient wall; before then, the cathedral was used as a penn for black cattle. It is to be hoped that the successors of this great and good man will pay the same attention to it.

It was in Ireland that the venerable St. Columba was born: we are told, that when the Romans drove the Druids out of Britain, they took refuge in Ireland. Be that as it will, they brought no accession of knowledge into that country; since no people now on the face of the globe can boast a more remote origin, or trace instances of earlier government and civilization, than the Irish. It has been a pitiful prejudice in too many writers, to throw discredit upon the early history of that island. This ill-judged policy began as far back as the days of Henry the Second, who sent over Giraldus Cambrensis for the avowed purpose of collecting and publishing what he could find that was disadvantageous to the character of the natives. Numerous and wonderful are the lying inventions of this writer. A person* to whom Mr. O'Flaherty prefaces his *Ogyia*, wrote a detection of this man's misrepresentations and slanders, which he called *Cambrensis Eversus*. Sir James Ware, who published his *Antiquities of Ireland* under Queen Anne, "wonders that some men of his age, otherwise grave and learned, should obtrude those fictions of Giraldus upon the world for truths." Indeed, no writer of any judgment has ever attempted to justify the groundless and incredible fables of Cambrensis. Even Mr. Pinkerton, although a malicious slanderer, asserts that Cambrensis shews the greatest ignorance in his account of the Irish history.

As the learning of the Hebridians lay principally among the ecclesiastics, the manuscripts, as in other countries at that period, were mostly confined to churches and cloisters. The sanctity of these places could not, nevertheless, secure them against the shocks and revolutions to which every thing here

* Mr. Josiah Lynch, titular archbishop of Tuam;

below is subject. The Danes ransacked and burned Icolmkill in the tenth century, the chief repository of old papers; and whatever it contained of antiquity or arts was destroyed. This gave a fatal stab to Gaelic learning.

In attempting to show the saint in his real character, we shall make no farther use of that mass of wonders which was mentioned, than as it serves to illustrate the character of Columba, or the spirit of the times in which he lived. Of these marvellous relations, we do not profess to believe any, nor would be so bold as to deny them all. In circumstances such as those in which Columba stood, called forth to extirpate an old and inveterate superstition, and to establish the true religion upon its ruins, and to contend with powerful and artful promulgators of that superstition, we cannot, without presumption, say how far it might be fit that God should countenance the labours of his faithful servant, and vouchsafe him, even by signs and wonders, as he often did to his ministers in such cases, a clear and decided victory. A reflection somewhat similar to this is made by one of his biographers, after mentioning the issue of a contest to which the saint was challenged by the Pictish priests or Druids, before an immense crowd of spectators, near the royal palace at Lochness.

But of these matters, as we must allow ourselves to be very incompetent judges, it is our wisdom to be silent. The life of Columba is abundantly uncommon and interesting without them; and his example, as will in that case be the more imitable, will be also the more useful; and with a view to imitation in usefulness, do we attempt to unfold this holy man's life and character.

Columba was a native of Ireland, descended from the royal family of that kingdom, and nearly allied to the kings of Scotland. Like many others who made a conspicuous figure in the world, his birth is said to have been preceded by some extraordinary circumstances. Maveth, the disciple of St. Patrick, is said to have predicted the birth and name of Columba*, and the

* The mother of Felim was Aithne, daughter of Lorn, who first reigned,

lasting glory which he should acquire by converting the western isles to Christianity.

His mother also, when with child of the saint, dreamed one night that a person, whose figure and mein seemed to denote him to be more than human, had presented her with a veil or garment of the most beautiful texture and colours; that, in a little time, however, he resumed his gift, and raising and expanding it in the sky, allowed it to fly through heaven: as it flew, it continued to extend itself on all hands, over mountains and plains, till at length it covered an expanse which her eye was not able to measure. Finding what she had once possessed gone out of her reach, and likely to be irrecoverably lost, she could not help expressing her sorrow and regret, till the angel thus addressed her: Be not grieved at not being allowed to retain this valuable gift but for a very short time. It is an emblem of that child of which thou art soon to be the mother, for him hath God ordained as one of his prophets, to be extensively

in conjunction with his brother Fergus, over the Scots or Dalreudini, in Argyleshire. In those times noblemen were not seldom preachers of the gospel. St. Ciaran, who preached to the Attacotti, or Dalreudini, in Kintyre, and died in 594 (see Ware); from him the parish of Kil-chiaran, of late called Campbeltown, takes its name. The estimation in which St. Ciaran was held in his life time, may be judged of from the vision of St. Baithen, who dreamed that he had seen three splendid chairs prepared in heaven, one of gold, one of silver, and one of glass; and agreed in the interpretation of their being intended for Ciaran, Laisran, and Columba. There is also extant a beautiful Irish ode of his, being a farewell to his monastery in Ireland, when he set out for Scotland. The imagery of this piece is singular; seven angels, Uriel, Ithiel, &c. are represented as having the charge of this monastery, each his own day in succession throughout the week, and then returning to give the recording angel an account of what passed in the cathedral; an idea well calculated to excite in the monks the strictest attention to conduct, and the strongest desire to excel. Bede says, that Iona belonged then to the Picts. The Irish annals, and after them Usher, say it belonged to the Scots; and Adomnan, who knew best, seems in effect to say the same, when he tells us that their territories were by the Dorsum, Britannie, or Drim-Albin.

useful upon earth, and to lead an innumerable company of souls to heaven.

Columba was born in the year 521, and his parents being thus, as they believed, admonished of the part which their son was destined to act in life, and to which they soon perceived his genius, and early disposition to piety to be peculiarly adapted, lost no time in providing him with such education as tended to qualify him for the sacred office. They first put him under the care of Cruineachan, a devout presbyter, who discovered, as he thought, in his disciple, while yet a child, extraordinary symptoms of his future glory and greatness. Some time after, he studied under Finnian, bishop of Clonard, a man (according to Ware) of considerable learning, who was charmed with the piety of Columba; while he was yet but a child, he used to give him the appellation of saint; and believed, from his uniformly holy and regular life, that he had obtained from God an angel from heaven, to be his companion and guardian.

Fenbar also, a bishop and saint, is mentioned as one of Columba's masters; and likewise Genman, a teacher of Leinster, who, like his other masters, used to give his pupil the name of saint; and, notwithstanding the great disparity of their years, seems to have treated him more as a companion and friend than as a scholar; sometimes asking his opinion about the most dark and mysterious dispensations of Providence. Under him the piety of Columba, now in deacon's orders, became conspicuous, and his fame spread over a great part of the kingdom, to which the following incident seems to have contributed not a little. One day as the old man read his book in the fields, a young girl, pursued by a barbarian, fled to him for protection. He immediately cried to his pupil, who was reading at a little distance. The aid of both was unavailable; the ruffian, with one thrust of his spear, left her dead at their feet. "Ah (said Genman), how long will God, the righteous judge, allow this atrocious deed to go unpunished. "The soul of the murderer (replied Columba) may yet be in hell as soon as that of the murdered in heaven."

At that instant they observed the unhappy man fall dead at

some distance, a sacrifice, it is probable, to the violence of his own passions, though ascribed by the people to the appeal which was made to heaven by Genman and Columba.

How much Columba was loved and revered by his companions, during his stay in this place, appears from the wonderful veneration with which he was received when he came to visit them some time afterwards. All the people in the cathedral, and its neighbourhood, poured out to meet him, kissed him with the utmost reverence and affection, and singing hymns and psalms of praise, led him to their church, surrounded with a rail of wood, carried by four men, to prevent his being incommoded by so immense a multitude. From some of the eastern churches he is said to have borrowed the model of his monastic rule; in Italy he is said to have founded a cathedral; and in France he was solicited by King Sigibert, who made him large promises to remain with him. But Columba, whose ambition was to be useful, rather than great, told him that he was so far from coveting the wealth of others, that for Christ's sake he had already renounced his own.

Ireland had now, for a long time, enjoyed the light of the gospel, and abounded in saints and learned men, while the isles and northern parts of Scotland were still covered with darkness, and in the shackles of superstition. On these dismal regions, therefore, Columba looked with a pitying eye, and however forbidding the prospect, resolved to become the apostle of the Highlands. Accordingly, in the year 563, he set out with twelve of his friends and followers, and landed* in the isle of Hi, or Iona, near the confines of the Scottish and Pictish territories. This

* This place where Columba landed in Icolmkill, is called, in Gaelic, *Port-a-churaich*; this was the order of the Culdees in Scotland, an order of which Columba was the founder. He and his followers were distinguished for learning, purity of faith, and sanctity of life; they preached only such works of charity and piety as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings.

place he probably chose, as being conveniently situated for his attending to the important duty which he had to manage in Ireland, as well as for carrying on the work he had in view in Scotland. Besides, if he should succeed in procuring a grant of it, he might discover in it those properties which was generally sought for in the site of religious houses.

Columba was now in the 42d year of his age, and needed all his vigour of mind and body in encountering those difficulties which presented themselves when he undertook the conversion of the northern Picts to Christianity. The priests, or Druids, as they were most interested, so they were most forward to oppose him, and wanted neither eloquence, influence, or art, to effect their purpose. The country itself was wild, woody, and mountainous, and greatly infested with wild beasts, from which the life of the saint seems to have been more than once in imminent danger. And what appears to have been the greatest difficulty of all, he was so little master of the dialect of that people, at least of some among them, that for some time he required an interpreter, when he preached to them the words of salvation. Besides all this, the austerity of his own manners, sometimes for whole days, watching and praying for whole nights, submitting to constant fatigue of body and anxiety of mind abroad, or the most intense application to study at home; and withal, so self-denied and crucified to the world, as to reject what we are now accustomed to consider as its innocent comforts and enjoyments.

St. Columba visited Brude, king of the Picts, at his royal palace, situated to the east of Lochness; St. Columba's journey to Brude's royal seat, was over the range of mountains called Drim-Albin; and that Drim-Albin divided the Caledonians from the Picts. The southern Picts were, according to Bede's authority, converted to Christianity by St. Ninian; the northern Caledonians by St. Columba. The learned antiquarian, Innes, writes, however, from this account that Adomnan gives us of the bounds of the Scottish and Pictish dominions in St. Columba's time, that since the island Iona was, as it were, in the heart

or centre of the kingdom of the Caledonians, composed of the islands, and mainland, as above, and separated from the Pictish dominions by sea and land, it could not have been the Picts, as Bede relates, but must needs have been the Caledonians that gave it to St. Columba, and his disciples. We find the island of Iona always mentioned by Adomnan, as being in the kingdom of the Caledonians in Britain, and the inhabitants of it as subjects of the king of the Caledonians. There it was that St. Columba inaugurated Aydan king of the Caledonians. There St. Columba and his disciples pray for victory to King Aydan as their sovereign. There King Aydan consults the saint which of his sons were to live to be his successor. As to Bede ascribing to the Picts the donation of Iona to St. Columba, he being a stranger, and living at a distance from these parts, and having his account of Icolmkill only by hearsay, his authority on this subject ought not to be put in balance with that of Adomnan, who was, himself, abbot of Icolmkill near St. Columba's time, and one of his successors; and, besides, had his information from those who lived with the saint, and from the originals in the cathedral itself.

It is certain, since the first invention of letters in Scotland, till as late as the tenth century, as above stated, there were ancient historical records in existence, containing genealogical accounts of its kings, whether Scottish or Pictish, and narratives of remarkable events in the history of its inhabitants. The period of three hundred and fifteen years applies to the era which Kenneth M'Alpin, after having conquered the Picts, began to reign over all Albin, down to the reign of William Rufus, the brother of Malcolm the Fourth. The author of this little treatise was a cotemporary of Andrew, bishop of Caithness, who, according to the chronicle of Maylross, and a catalogue of the bishop of Scotland by R. K. died in the year 1185. It is to be presumed that the author wrote in the twelfth century, when, as yet, there existed ancient historical records from which he derived information.

This fanciful picture of Scotland represents correctly, so far

as it goes, the relative situation of those parts of Albin, which were, in the view of the writer, to be described. It may be observed, although it does not relate to Columba, that the writer says that the principal parts of this form and figure of a man, that is the head, is in Earra-Ghael, in the western part of Scotia, or Scotland, over against the sea of of Ireland, viz. Kintyre, or, as it is more applicable in the Gaelic language, *Ceann-tìre*, owing to the narrow peninsula betwixt west Loch Tarbert, and the town of Tarbert on the east shore. This peninsula is about one mile in breadth; and that large tract of country called Kintyre, is about sixty miles west from Tarbert. Earra, or *Ari-ghael*, is a compound of *Ari* and *Ghael*. *Ari* signifies a breeding place, *arich* to breed; and *ariche*, plural, a cattle breeder. *Bothan-ari* is a small hut, or booth, erected on some favourite spot of breeding ground. Such spots of ground are called, in the language of the low country Scots, sheelings. So that, evidently, *Ari-ghael* is the breeding grounds of the Gael, and, therefore, extended in ancient times over the whole mountainous tracts of Albin, from the western to the eastern sea. The arms of this figure are those mountains, which divide Scotia from *Ari-ghael*. *Ari-ghael* was held anciently to be the country of the people whose name was latinized Scoti; and the name Scotia was so called from that by which the people came to be denominated.

The voluminous account given of this saint by his biographers, and the limits to which our work must necessarily be confined, obliges us to limit our remarks to the principal transactions of this great man's life. By him the greater part of the Pictish kingdom was converted to Christianity, and numerous churches were established. He superintended the Pictish, Irish, and most of the Scottish churches, and was every where received with an enthusiastic veneration almost bordering on adoration. He was very much resorted to even as a physician, and the place of his residence was so sacred and venerable, that to rest in its dust was, for many centuries, the highest ambition of princes and kings. His cathedral was, at that time, the principal seat of

learning, perhaps in Europe, and the nursery whence pastors and divines were furnished, not only to 100 monasteries and above 300 churches, which he himself had established, but also to those of many neighbouring nations.

But St. Columba was not less assiduous in propagating Christianity, than in teaching his hearers the useful arts of life. His skill in physic was such, that his cures were often accounted miracles. In politics and government he was deeply skilled, and made a most conspicuous figure in the famous council of Drumceat, about the right of succession to the Scottish throne. With agriculture he was well acquainted, and patronized it to the utmost of his power. His monks daily laboured in the field, and he made frequent and ample presents of grain for seed. To horticulture he paid great attention; and Adomnan makes particular mention of apple trees. He had also a baker from Saxony in his monastery, the only one, perhaps, at that time in Britain.

St. Columba, though royally descended, and nearly related to the kings of Ireland and Scotland, renounced all his secular prospects and property for the sake of the gospel. These he considered as an incumbrance to his Christian course, and gave his territorial possessions to his three uncles (as Odonellus informs us) reserving no stipulated part for himself, but submitting wholly to their generosity. St. Ciaran endeavoured to rival St. Columba, but this rivalry only extended to great and good actions. Ciaran was, however, admonished of his presumption in endeavouring to rival St. Columba. An angel appeared to him in a dream, and holding up an axe (Ciaran's father was a carpenter) said, "You only surrendered this for the love of God, but St. Columba surrendered a kingdom." On the many great and noble qualities of this venerable man, our limits prevent us from expatiating. We shall therefore content ourselves with remarking, that he was a great and extraordinary man raised up by providence, to accomplish a great and extraordinary work.

The credulity and superstition of the age in which he lived are strongly marked by his biographers, who enumerate as miracles mere trifles, incidents or casual occurrences. A few may not be

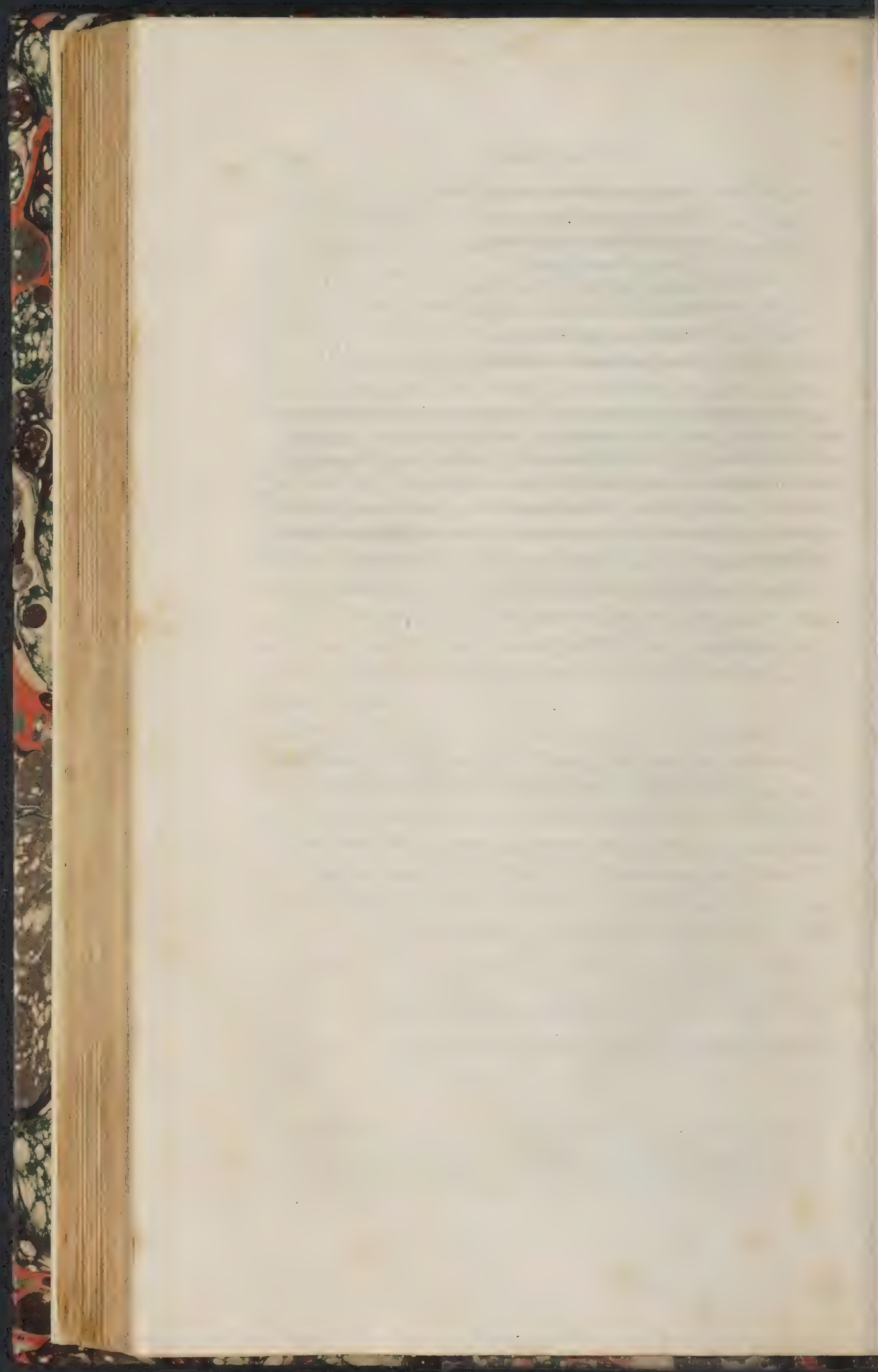
unacceptable. The saint saw a man falling from a considerable height, and prayed to an angel to save him. The man escaped unhurt, and hence the saint's biographer takes occasion to descant on the efficacy of prayer, and the speed and velocity of angels. A certain nobleman and his wife had disagreed, and no effort of the saint could reconcile them. The saint was a great faster, and had recourse to the last resource of enjoining them to a long abstinence from food, in which he accompanied them. This brought about the wished reconciliation, the wife (as was naturally to be expected) having first shrunk from this severe ordeal, and proposed terms of accommodation. This was accounted no mean miracle. His prophecies are numerous. He foretold a defeat of the Scots, and the same day a messenger arrived with the intelligence. He prophesied that a little girl, who used to bring him his inkhorn, would let it fall, which actually came to pass. We mention the above miracles, and prophecies, not with a view to derogate from the merits of this truly great man, but merely as specimens of the ignorance and credulity of the age in which he lived.

The famed sanctity of Icolmkill needs neither comment nor illustration. Here, according to our own historians, forty-eight kings of Scotland, four of Ireland, and eight of Norway, were interred. Donald Monro, high dean of the isles, in 1549, gives a description of this burying ground, and particularly mentions the three following inscriptions, viz. *Tumulus regum Scotiæ*—*Tumulus regum Hiberniæ*—*Tumulus regum Norvegiæ*. As far as we can learn, the M'Donells of Glengarry were the last family in Scotland who were interred in Icolmkill. The sanctity of the place, aided by an ancient Gaelic prophecy, for many centuries made this the most renowned cemetery in the world. We shall conclude with a translation of the above prophecy, given by Dr Smith of Campbeltown*.

* The Editors of these sheets are much indebted to the writings of the learned and pious Reverend John Smith, D. D. late of Campbeltown, for the account given of the life of St. Columba. Perhaps there has been none

“ Seven years before that awful day,
When time shall be no more,
A watery deluge shall o’ersweep
Hibernia’s mossy shore.
The green-clad Isla too shall sink,
Whilst with the great and good,
Columba’s happy isle shall rear
Her towers above the flood.”

in North Britain, since the days of St. Columba, to whom the public are more indebted, than to the Reverend Dr. Smith, for his faithful translation of the scriptures, and several religious books, besides many other works of his own composition, which will be useful to succeeding ages. Add to this his holy and exemplary life and conversation: his name ought to be recorded in the annals of history—as a great divine, a bright genius, and a good man.



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ERRATA.

Page 7. Line 21. For *in* read *on*.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 41. | 24. For <i>Tod</i> read <i>Jod</i> . |
| 64. | 9. After <i>on which</i> , insert <i>it</i> . |
| 70. | 5. For <i>Slade</i> read <i>Wade</i> . |
| 71. | 18. After <i>could have induced</i> , insert <i>the author</i> . |
| 72. | 8. After <i>Mac Stairn</i> , delete the full point, and substitute a comma. |
| | 20. For <i>is</i> read <i>are</i> . |
| 74. | 20. For <i>regular</i> read <i>regularly</i> . |
| 141. | 23. For <i>fairer</i> read <i>fair</i> . |
| 144. | 19. For <i>raise</i> read <i>rise</i> . |
| 149. | 12. For <i>redest</i> read <i>reddest</i> . |
| 171. | 2. For <i>Hand</i> read <i>Haud</i> . |
| | 8. For <i>Cælo</i> read <i>Cælo</i> . |
| | 24. For <i>remains</i> read <i>remain</i> . |
| 177. | 24. For <i>bears</i> read <i>bear</i> . |
| 178. | 22. For <i>himseif</i> read <i>himself</i> . |
| 182. | 9. After <i>it</i> , delete the full point, and continue the sentence. |
| 198. | 14. For <i>statute</i> read <i>statue</i> . |
| | 15. For <i>supertiously</i> read <i>superstitiously</i> . |
| 200. | 28. For <i>Flalk</i> read <i>Flath</i> . |
| 207. | 17. After <i>come</i> , delete the comma. |
| 212. | 6. For <i>forts</i> read <i>fort</i> . |
| 215. | 30. For <i>grossy</i> read <i>glossy</i> . |
| 217. | 17. <i>Domhnill's</i> read <i>Domhnuill's</i> . |
| 219. | 31. For <i>monosyllale</i> read <i>monosyllable</i> . |

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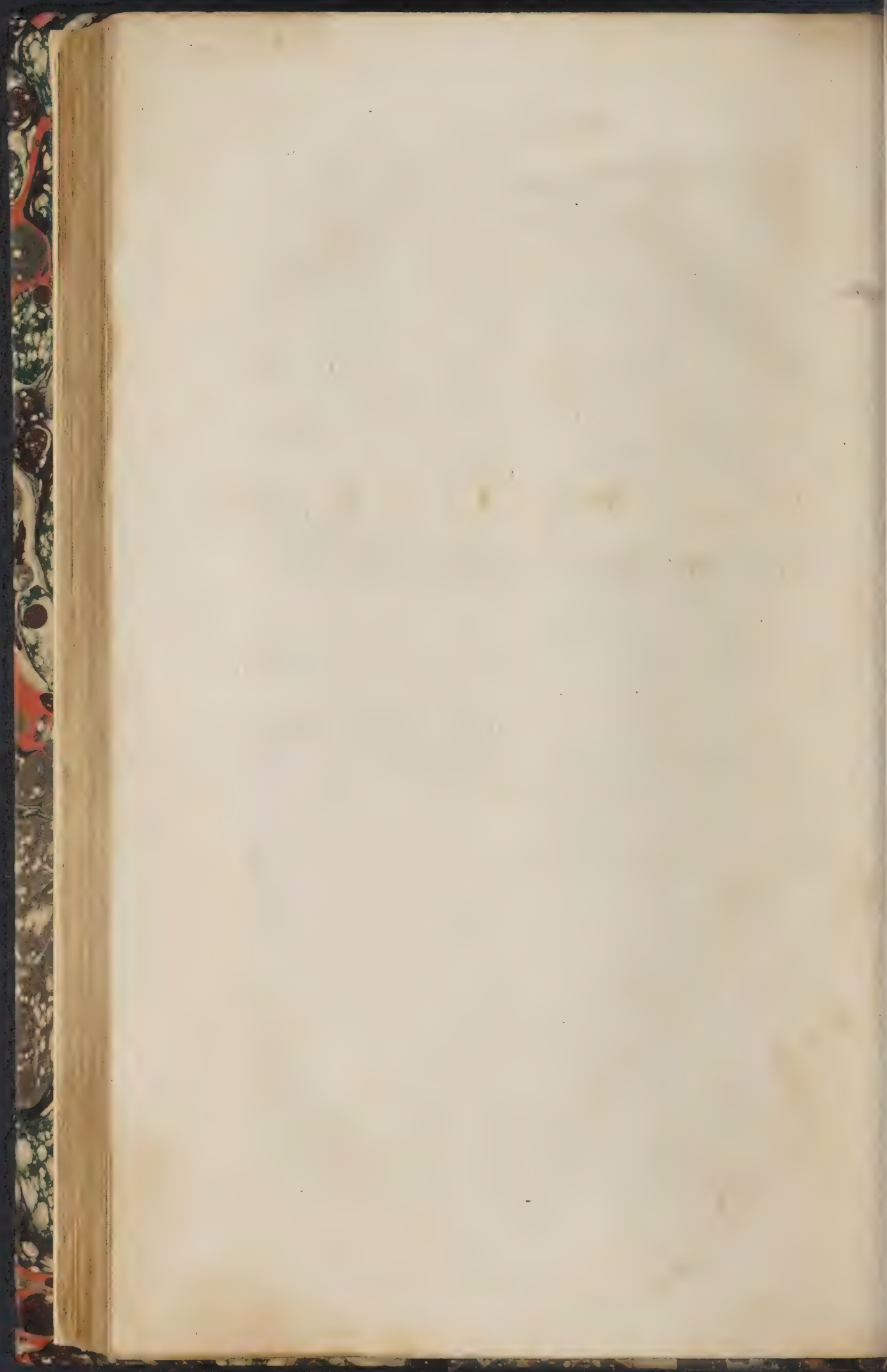
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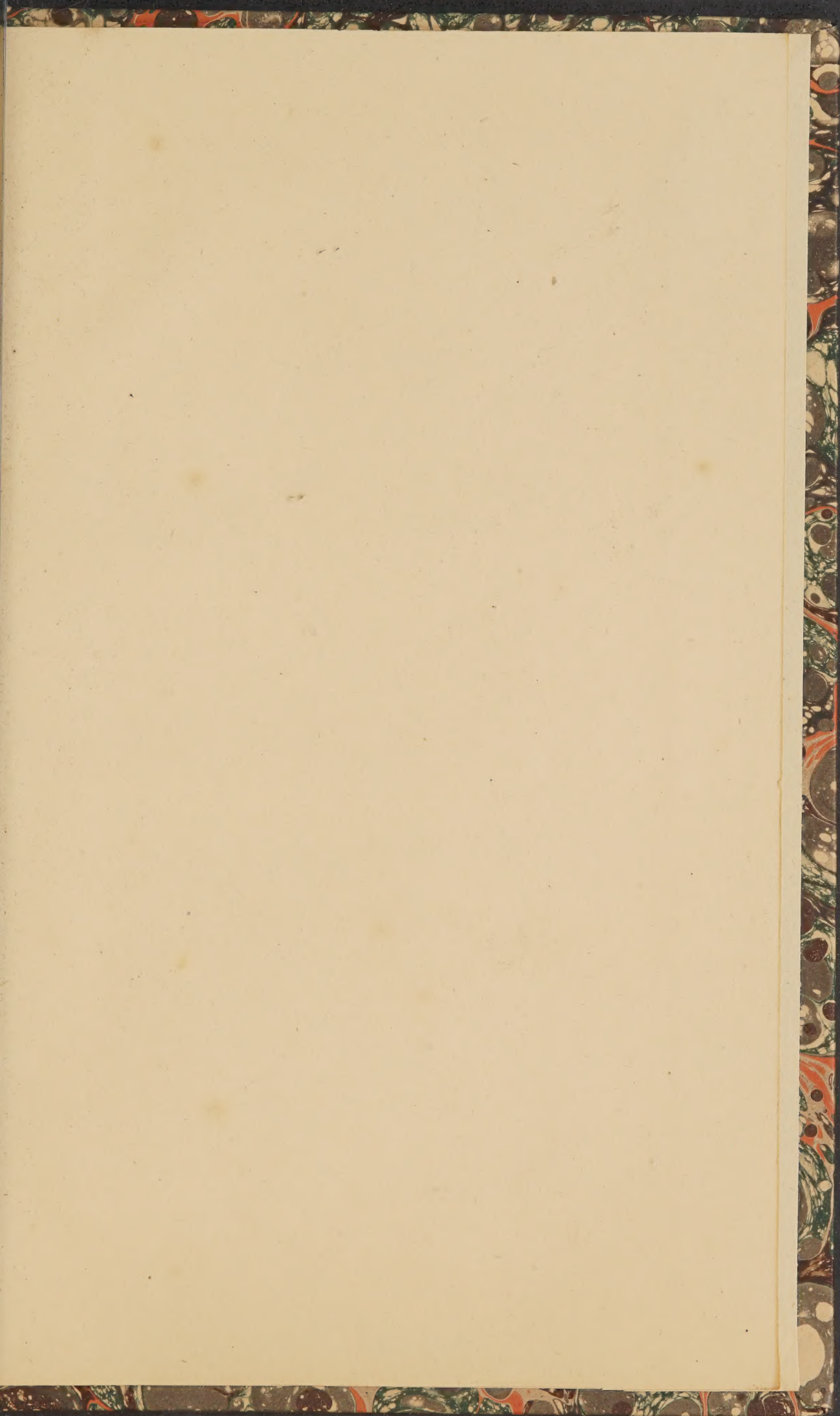
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